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The community newspaper at the heart of Bahrain

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WEDDING DAY:
Doctors in love
SEE PAGE 3



EATING OUT
Ramadan fare:
SEE PAGE 11

SAVE THE WHALES

Campaigner Cousteau on Russian mission before heading to Bahrain

WORLD-RENOWNED oceanographer and environmental campaigner Jean-Michel Cousteau will be heading to Bahrain for the first time next week to stage a two-day interactive session at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain just days after making a 'diplomatic humanitarian' effort to help 'Save the Russian Whales'.

In July and August of 2018, a collection of whaling companies captured 10 orcas and 87 beluga whales in the Sea of Okhotsk so that they could be sold to theme parks in China. The Russian Government has determined that the capture was illegal and they are not permitting the sale.

The whales are now being held in ocean pens, which campaigners call 'whale prisons', near Nakhodka. The goal is to return the whales to the locations where they were captured in the Sea of Okhotsk so that



TOP-LEVEL TALKS: Jean-Michel Cousteau, inset, and the whales in their icy 'prison'

ENVIRONMENT REPORT

By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



they can be returned to their families.

The whales cannot simply

be released because they would not survive the current icy ocean conditions, far from their home waters, and without the help of their normal family and

community structure.

A team of scientists and experts assembled by The Whale Sanctuary Project are now in Russia to help the Russian government

assess the current health of the creatures. Four of the whales are since believed to have died in their unnatural confinement.

Turn to Page 2



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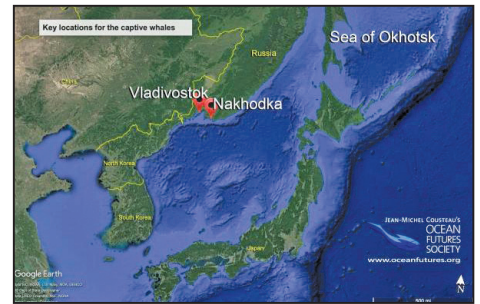
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Fight to protect our oceans

From Page 1

The team includes Jean-Michel, president of Ocean Futures Society, Charles Vinick, executive director of The Whale Sanctuary Project, and whale rehabilitation and release experts Jeff Foster and Ingrid Visser.

The team also wants to help make plans for the return of the whales. Jean-Michel, Charles and The Whale Sanctuary team attended a press conference on Thursday in Vladivostok, along with the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and others.

"We are not here to criticise, we are here to help and see that in some way, after a certain time, we can release them," said Cousteau after meeting with Dmitri Kobylkin, Russia's environment minister.

Jean-Michel, 81, will help install video cameras in the animals' pens that will 'raise the chances of conducting a successful release of the animals into their natural habitat in the future', local scientists said.

The whales were captured illegally last year by a consortium of four companies whose apparent intention was to sell them to marine entertainment parks in China, according to the Whale Sanctuary Project.

The minister, speaking at the press conference with Cousteau, said the whales should be set free eventually. He claimed they hadn't been liberated before because it was winter.

"If we had released the animals at this period, they all would have died," he said. "Summer is coming, and now we can, and we have to, conduct this work."

The group is now on its way to visit the whales in Nakhodka and Jean-Michel, said: "Please share the news of this project with others so that together we can work towards helping to reduce the suffering of these whales and work towards returning them



DIVING IN: Jean-Michel under the sea, above, from left, attending a meeting with officials in Moscow, the captive whales and their key locations

to their families in their home waters."

Jean-Michel, who first dived with an aqua-lung in 1945 when he was seven-years-old, meanwhile, used his blog to highlight the importance of the whales.

"We have reached a point in our human evolution where people are realising that cetaceans, including orcas and dolphins, are far too intelligent, sophisticated and socially and behaviourally complex to be kept in concrete prisons," he wrote.

"In captivity, they suffer from mental distress, physical illness and shorter lifespans than they would live in their natural ocean homes.

"Sound is their primary sense used for communication, socialisation and hunting. When confined in concrete tanks, orcas cannot fully utilise this highly-evolved sense to understand the world around them."

"Protect the Ocean and You Protect Yourself" is one of his campaign mottos and his latest endeavours will surely be one of the hot topics up for discussion during his visit to the kingdom.

This coming Monday and Tuesday he will be taking young audiences and adults alike on a 'land to sea'

journey unveiling his life-long expeditions and explorations of unique ocean environments and the natural wonders of the world.

For more than four decades, Jean-Michel has dedicated himself and his vast experiences to communicate to people of all nations and generations his love and concern for our water planet.

His foundation, Ocean Futures Society, a non-profit marine conservation and education organisation based in Santa Barbara, California, serves as a 'Voice for the

Ocean' by communicating to audiences the critical bond between people and the sea and the importance of wise environmental policy.

As the son of pioneering sea adventurer Jacques Cousteau (1910-1997), who was best known for his TV series *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau*, Jean-Michel continues his father's legacy, serving as an impassioned ambassador of the environment, reaching out to the public through a variety of media and educational programmes.

COMPLEMENTING Jean-Michel's visit, the resort has launched a new Land to Sea adventure package. Greeted by Pearl 1's Captain Hussain, families will arrive to the 20-acre beachfront resort for a fun-on-the-sea family adventure with dolphin-watching excursions, paddle boarding and kayaking activities, sandcastle building, crab hunting and more.

And, by Captain's order, little shipmates will also enjoy their very own sailor's hat, binoculars set, bath time 'sea rubber toys', treasure hunt map, and even their own Ritz Kids 'look

out' chair on the resort's private island. Starting at BD362, the family package for a family of four (two adults and two children aged from four to 12) and includes Ritz-Carlton Club Level accommodation with club lounge access. A two-night minimum stay is required for bookings until December 31.

Call 17580000 for more details, or visit ritzcarlton.com/Bahrain. Follow the hotel on Facebook and Instagram @ritzcarltonbahrain and join the conversation using #RCMemories #RitzCarltonBahrain.

GulfWeekly attempted to contact the explorer for further comment and Nancy Marr, who helped found Ocean Futures Society with Jean-Michel, said they were both 'very much looking forward' to the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain engagement. They will also be travelling to a sister property in Dubai for a similar presentation.

"Please be advised that Mr Cousteau is unavailable due to being inaccessible in Russia due to the diplomatic humanitarian efforts to Save the Russian Whales," she explained.

He once told a newspaper in North Carolina how important he felt it was to engage the young over environmental issues. "Experiencing the ocean will help children relate to the role it plays in our lives," he said. "They are so open. They are like sponges. Their creativity is unbelievable."

In an interview with a website a year after his father's death, Jean-Michel stated that dumping waste was one of the real threats to the ocean. According to the French campaigner: "There are places where it's so bad that aquatic reproduction is affected."

He also told the same reporter that it was a shame

that humans had mapped the surface of the moon and yet knew very little about the oceans. "We know very little when it comes to depths deeper than conventional divers or submersibles can go. Beyond the continental shelf of 500 feet, we know nothing."

Management and staff members at the five-star beach property are as excited by his coming visit as much as the region's environmental campaigners. "Having watched the television sea adventures of his late father as a child it gives me great pleasure to welcome his son, Jean-Michel, a global partner of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel brand and visionary behind our global Ritz Kids programme," said Bernard de Villèle, GM of The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain. "It's been a dream of mine for as long as I could remember, and we are delighted to have him here to share his passion for the environment with our Community Footprint partner schools, guests and Royal Beach Club members."

● Jean-Michel has appealed for public support with the Save the Russian Whales campaign. For more details visit <http://www.oceanfutures.org/news/blog/save-russian-whales-orientation>



It was love at first flight for doctors Raniah Bogari and Ayman Elmeligy who met while travelling to Georgia for a medical conference ... and sealed the deal in style with marriage in Bahrain.

The sweethearts celebrated tying the knot with a dance as a violinist played the couple's favourite song *Can't Take My Eyes Off You* followed by a party with family and friends at Reef Resort.

"To be honest, it was love at first sight above the clouds," said Raniah, who graduated from the medical school in Berlin and specialised as a dermatologist at the Charite University of Berlin before starting a career in aesthetic dermatology. "It was our destiny to meet up unexpectedly and fall in love in an airplane on our way to Tbilisi."

Raniah, of Saudi Arabian and Lebanese descent, boasts more than 22 years' experience working in dermatology in Germany, and moved to the kingdom with her 13-year-old daughter, British School of Bahrain student, Ranim, three years ago to work alongside her sister Rim, a dentist, at the Bogari Denta Derma Centre.

She had graduated from the medical school in Berlin and specialised as a dermatologist at its Charite University, before starting a career in aesthetic dermatology.

Ayman, a consultant plastic surgeon and a university associate professor, gained his medical education at the

COMMUNITY REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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University of Michigan and Ain Shams University. His career flourished working between the US and Latin America.

The two were flying to a congress of Aptos thread lifting trainers, a non-surgical treatment for minimally-invasive skin rejuvenation.

The highly-respected medics, who are often invited to speak at international conferences and congresses, are both popular on social media and boast thousands of followers which was one reason they decided to keep their special day 'close and intimate'.

"Our wedding day was just for us, our families and closest friends in an intimate atmosphere full of love and happiness," explained Raniah. "Besides, a wedding celebrates the start of two hearts joining together in love and harmony."

The couple danced into the sunset cheered on by the guests. Afterwards, there was an outdoor candlelight dinner before they took to the floor again for a sizzling salsa routine which they had been secretly practicing for the past two months.

Raniah added: "Now we are not only considered as the 'professional doctor couple' but we are also known as



WEDDED BLISS: Just what the doctor ordered for newly-weds Raniah and Ayman

the 'salsa duo', dancing with love and passion."

The couple are enjoying a quiet honeymoon at home in Hamala after months of travelling to congresses around the globe and preparing for the wedding. They will set off on a romantic holiday away at a later date.



WARM WELCOME: Reef Resort's GM Rocco Santopietro greets the blushing bride



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HELPING HAND: Inge hoping to assist pet owners during a crisis

SOS fund for pet move



A fundraising initiative has been set up to assist expat owners in financial hardship trying to get their family pets back to their home countries with them.

Inge Michiels has started selling donated items and accepting donations to help families transport their beloved mutts and moggies, after hearing of the plight faced by many people losing their jobs or finding their contracts suddenly severed.

The Emergency Relocation Fund was set up only a few weeks ago and Belgian expat Inge, said: "We have seen heart-breaking situations occur, and the owners' unwavering loyalty to their pet as they frantically try to find a way to relocate their beloved family member."

"Through every setback, no matter how big, these owners never have a second thought about not overcoming these challenging and very emotional situations."

"This is what inspired our Emergency Relocation Fund. The pet lifeline has been created to provide dedicated pet owners, who are truly in need, a form of support to relocate their animals. To raise money for the fund, we sell pet items donated to us by our generous and loyal customers."

"Expatriate life can be very unpredictable. Unforeseen circumstances occur causing you to relocate, which can result in the devastating realisation that you cannot afford to take your pet back with you."

Inge, 44, runs JetPetGlobal, a division of Fur and Feathers, established in 2012 and based near the airport, after the founder found herself regularly taking care of her friends' pets and was also helping out the occasional acquaintance who left Bahrain with their pet.

COMMUNITY REPORT

By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



She is married to management consultant Frederik, 43, and they have two children. They arrived in Bahrain in 2005 and are now settled in Amwaj Islands. "The response has been very warm. People know expat life can be very unpredictable and I think a lot of people can relate to it," she added.

"When I realised we needed a fund, I knew we could not just put another donation box on the veterinary counters."

"Customers have left us pet items before to use, or to give away, so we now hold on to the nice things instead of giving them to pet-related charities."

"We've had cat scratch posts, travel crates, water fountains, dog beds and dog toys. The prices vary but are way below market value to make it a win-win for everybody."

Expats leaving the island have often been blamed for adding to the stray dog crisis on the island. Inge hopes this initiative will play a small part in helping find a solution, although she's not convinced these owners are by any means the main cause of the problem.

"I only partially agree," she said. "Yes, people sometimes only see one way out, especially when life changes very unexpectedly and there is no time for planning. But there are enough people who contact us to suggest that left behind pets are only a part of the stray issue."

"It sort of implies that only large desert mixes are left behind and all the cute cats and dogs travel but, lucky for them, small pets often find new homes easier when they can't travel – the stray issue has much more to do with birth control."

"Price may be an obstacle,

however, when people are moving out, they usually have items to sell which usually cover all costs."

"The real problem may be that people pick up animals from the roadside and fill up their homes with all the best intentions, but then, when their contract runs out, reality hits hard. The cost combined with a large number of pets makes it really difficult."

The hassle of paperwork often scares people too as well as necessary health checks, veterinary certificates and booking flights, which is where relocation services come into their own.

Relocation prices vary but prices heavily depend on the destination and the airline used. A regular European transit city is London and to bring a cat to the UK could cost around BD800. And, importing pets from Bahrain to the US, as another example, also requires careful planning as requirements may vary from state to state.

"That sounds like a lot of money for a cat you may have picked up from the street," said Inge, who also offers pet courier and sitting services. "People forget that pets too may need a passport and visa and then they also need vaccinations, anti-parasite treatments, a safe crate and a cargo flight."

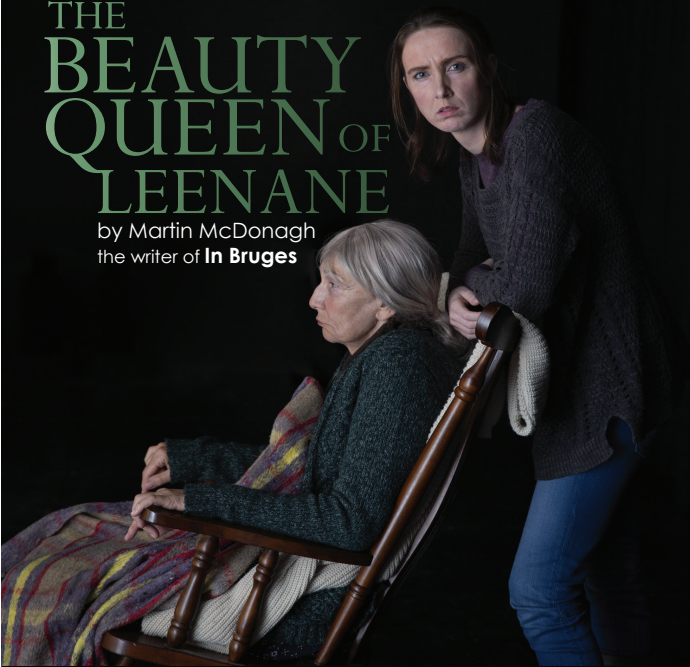
"Lots of people are also involved doing administration and handling – even taxes have to be paid upon entry. Some countries may allow a passenger to bring a cat in luggage and that makes it a lot more affordable. The downside is that your pet is handled as luggage and during the summer that is something many may want to avoid."

● For more details about the Emergency Relocation Fund visit <https://www.jetpetglobal.com/jetpet-global-is-launching-an-emergency-relocation-fund>

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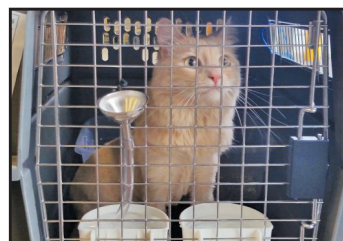
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TALENTED Bahraini Chef Tala Bashmi hopes to inspire others in the kingdom to cook up a career in the hospitality sector after winning a prize company accolade.

She has just received the coveted Gulf Hotel Group's CEO Award, presented annually in recognition of an 'outstanding contribution' to the success of the company by an employee at any level of the organisation.

Tala, 30, from East Riffa, who heads up the team in the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa's Fusions restaurant, began her career as one of the company's management trainees and attended a leading Swiss culinary school to help perfect her art.

"I'm extremely proud to have even been considered for this prestigious award," she said.

"It's been a long, gruelling road up until this point, so to be recognised by management for my hard work makes all the blood, sweat and tears worth it!"

"Working in the hospitality sector isn't a nine-to-five job. You spend long hours, actually most of your hours, at work but it is one of the most rewarding things you could ever be part of. You can find a sense of purpose that would be very difficult to find elsewhere."

"My family is my biggest influence when it comes to food. My mother grows so many beautiful vegetables for us and my father has a wealth of knowledge about local ingredients and dishes. I realised I wanted to be a chef when I was 16 but I never acted on it until later on."

The former Ibn Khuldun National School pupil signed up for the hotel's management training programme in 2014. "The training lasted around one-and-a-half years and it consisted of doing a rotation in the main kitchen, starting with butchery, and then continuing through all of the restaurants in the hotel."

"I finally ending up working with the executive chef, managing outlets, monitoring food costs and even helping to start our F1 campaign last year through creating menus to order ingredients."

Chef Tala attended the

Tala's talent rewarded

EXCLUSIVE

By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



Culinary Arts Academy in Luzern, Switzerland for two years and received an MBA in Culinary Management. She had to show her ability of understanding the theoretical aspects of the profession, from the foundations of cooking to the source and costs, through to the hazard analysis and critical control points, or 'HACCP', a systematic, preventive approach to food safety from biological, chemical and physical hazards in production processes that can cause the finished product to be unsafe, and to design measures to reduce these risks to a safe level.

Putting that knowledge to the test came next with internships at some of the leading restaurants in Switzerland such as the Les Trois Rois in Basel and Prisma in Park Hotel Vitznau. "The experience was very challenging at every level, but worth it in the end," she admitted.

She joined the hotel's Fusions team at the end of September 2018 as Senior Sous Chef before taking up the head chef's role and responsibilities and officially being appointed three months later.

Chef Tala picked up her prize at the recent Gulf Hotels Group Staff Party. Nominations had been submitted by senior corporate executives and company GMs to CEO Garfield Jones, who had the task of judging the strength of each nomination.

He said that since completing her training programme, Chef Tala had developed her own unique style of Bahrain fusion cuisine, appeared as a guest chef at a number of renowned restaurants in the region and, since taking over the reins of Fusions had 'significantly increased revenues' and 'enhanced the reputation' of the outlet and the hotel.

He also admired the way she had actively promoted both on

social media and had developed 'an enviable reputation' in a very short space of time for creating exciting, imaginative dishes. "She possess an amazing vision for someone so young and without doubt has an incredible future ahead of her. We're proud to have her as part of our team," he said.

The Gulf Hotel may be celebrating its 50th anniversary but is continuing to invest in its future. As reported in *GulfWeekly*, major renovation work has taken place at its Sherlock Holmes and Al Waha outlets, the La Pergola Italian restaurant is now graced with the talents of multi-Michelin starred Italian chef, Giancarlo Perbellini after a BD200,000-plus transformation, and a similar sum will be invested in rooftop restaurant Fusions, set to reopen with an outdoor terrace under the guidance of Tala.

What next for Tala?

"Renovations for Fusions are in the works, so a more daring and fun avant-garde menu will be set for the relaunch. The Gulf Hotel have been supporting and pushing me to always strive for greatness. Not only that, but they had the faith to allow me to take over Fusions with my own vision," she added, thanking Garfield, GM Fares Yactine, last year's winner and recently-promoted deputy GM Charbel Hanna, and food & beverage manager Sunuj Deen.

On the cooking front, she highlighted British celebrity chef Heston Blumenthal and Grant Achatz, an American chef and restaurateur often recognised for his contributions to progressive cuisine, for their 'sheer creativity and madness'.

"I would best describe my style of cooking as sustainable, local as possible, whimsical, sensory and nostalgic," she said. "But the world has become a melting pot of cultures, people's palates have evolved and many more diners have become interested in trying new things."

FUSIONS CUISINE: Chef Tala enjoying the challenge of leading a top hotel restaurant team



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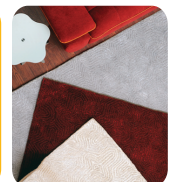
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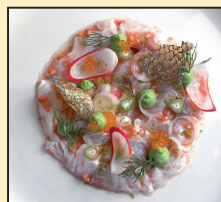
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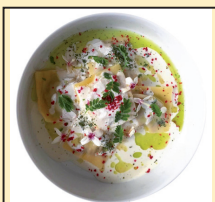
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● Chef Tala has shared three of her unique dishes, the first two will be on the coming Fusions menu and the last remains a firm favourite.



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3. Honest kids organic juice assorted flavour – BD2.520
4. Jules Distroper Hazelnut 100gm – BD2.260
5. Julian's Protein Bar Chocolate Lava 2.29oz – BD1.350

Well done ...and welcome!

RETAIL REPORT

By STAN SZECOWKA
 Editor@gulfweekly.com



LULU hypermarket staged a special Felicitation Ceremony to celebrate some of the first Bahrainis to join the company on its remarkable retail journey in the kingdom.

Jameel Humaidan, Minister of Labour & Social Development, and other VIPs, attended the event staged at Dana Mall in Sanabis, significantly where the first store opened in 2007.

It wowed shoppers with the concept of competitively-priced food, electrical items, clothing, home-ware and more and Lulu has since expanded its operations to Riffa, A'ali's Ramli Mall, Hidd, Juffair Mall and Galleria Mall, Zinj before the latest and seventh venture opened late last year in Saar.

Lulu Group Director Juzer Rupawala said: "We would like to show our appreciation to the Minister of Labour and the entire team for supporting Lulu Hypermarket right from day one."

He also said how proud the



VIP VISITOR: Juzer with Minister Jameel who is presented with a welcoming flower arrangement, right, flashback to Saar opening

group was to have Bahrainis play such an important role and making their positive presence felt. Certificates of appreciation and special rewards were presented to those who had reached a 10th anniversary milestone of employment in the kingdom. They were greeted

alongside young Bahrainis keen to carve a career in the burgeoning sector with the company as they filled in application forms at a 'signing ceremony' of their own as Lulu continues to attract, train and develop the next generation of retail pioneers.

Indian chairman and MD of Lulu Group, Yusuf Ali M.A., attended the opening of its newest hypermarket within Atrium Mall & Towers and described it at the time as 'a sign of our steady confidence in the bright future of Bahrain and our commitment to be

a part of the progress of the kingdom'.

Warm words indeed which were reciprocated by the reception that he received from the kingdom's leaders. Kerala-born Yusuf Ali met with HRH the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier,



Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and briefed him on Lulu Group's expansion plans for Bahrain.

As reported in *GulfWeekly*, Yusuf Ali revealed that Lulu's total investment in the kingdom had already crossed BD125m and there were more plans in store, including a new project around Muharaq Central Market.

He was quick to praise the local workforce too saying they formed the 'nucleus' of operations in and were 'a key' to the company's success. There are more than 1,200 Bahrainis who work in the group, he added, and he was 'proud to say' that Bahrainis have proved successful in managerial and specialised positions not only in the kingdom but across the Lulu network in other GCC countries.

That was great news for those looking for career opportunities and progression in the retail sector ... as last week's signing ceremony proved.



FinTechFocus

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

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FINTECH will radically improve the financial health of the people of the Gulf region through access to next-generation banking services, according to a Bahrain business supremo.

Simon Galpin, managing director of Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) urged companies to embrace innovation during Finnovex ME 2019, a recent one-day conference on financial innovation and excellence, held in Dubai.

"FinTech holds the strongest potential to impact the ME economy with the potential of open banking to transform the services available to consumers in the short to medium-term," he said. "We're also laying the foundations for the development of cryptocurrency in the Middle East. That's another technology that has the potential to take off and progress far beyond what we've seen to date."

"As technology continues to transform every sector and market, those who don't innovate are left behind. But creating the conditions for innovation is a little trickier, but is possible. It's more conducive to the culture of entrepreneurialism that we're fostering here as we create an environment for the next generation of digitally-minded companies to take root and flourish. The data economy in the region is expected to create 10,000 jobs for data scientists over five years."

Embracing innovation



LAYING FOUNDATIONS: Simon making a stand at conference gathering

The Finnovex ME 2019 brought together more than 300 delegates from many countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman and Egypt. It featured key banking and finance industry thought-leaders, focusing on the future of financial services to be

reshaped by the 'disruptive' technological innovations in structuring, provision and consumption.

The summit highlighted challenges and opportunities in the region, bringing together government authorities, representatives from central banks and local as well as

global financial institutions. It also recognised the best practices, organisations and individuals in the banking and financial services sectors for 'showcasing excellence' in adopting the industrial transformation.

Shabaz Ahmed, executive director at Exibex, said

the event examined how technology is changing the delivery of banking and payment services and discussed the roles of banks, FinTech companies and other stakeholders in building 'an impetus to this paradigm shift' as rapidly changing technology provides a 'momentous

opportunity' to transform banking and financial services.

"The Middle East is one of the world's fastest growing regions in the banking and capital markets sector," added Kanchi Shah, head of production, Exibex.

"The region's financial services sector is in the middle of an immense overhaul. With populations getting younger, better educated and more demanding, swelling diversity in financial products and services and rising regulatory requirements for better monitoring of processes and developing secure financial systems, banks and financial institutions across the region are investing heavily to match, or surpass, their international peers."

The Central Bank of UAE, EDB, Alinma Bank, Emirates NBD, Bahrain Islamic Bank, Arab National Bank, Jordan Ahli Bank, Riyad Bank, Al Fardan Exchange, Dubai Islamic Bank, Abu Dhabi Financial Group, Arab Bank for Investment & Foreign Trade, MENA Fintech Association and AXA Green Crescent Insurance Company were key partners of the event.

The organisers said these industrial fore-runners have been 'instrumental' in embracing change in the region.



Students win prizes for their initiative

STUDENTS have created an online tutoring website which aims to provide users with 'one-to-one' sessions using Skype services. Users can book services at their convenience and finalise the payment process online too.

The Online Tutoring website took first place and was chosen as the best project for the online education sector at the first edition of the e-Commerce

Forum and Exhibition for high school students held recently at Bahrain National Charter Monument in Sakhr.

Al Hekma International School students Abdullah Farahat Al Bunoodha, Alaa Elias Salameh Haddad, Mohamed Sayed Salahuddin Abduljalil and Elias Tawfeeq Hejari, all in Grade 12 and aged 18, won Lenovo tabs, in addition to prize certificates.

They are now aiming to improve the website by adding advanced services for users with disabilities following the competition which attracted 22 teams from schools across the kingdom.

The first edition of the event was held under the patronage of Zayed Rashid Al Zayani, the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism.

Banking on finding the correct solutions

NATIONAL Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has selected Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), a global IT services, consulting and business solutions organisation, to provide its TCS BaNCS solution for core banking in line with the bank's digital transformation.

It will standardise and streamline NBB's operations across multiple countries where the bank operates, not only in its home market of Bahrain but also in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where it is continuing to expand its presence and activities.

The solution spans customer management, loans, deposits, payments, origination, Islamic banking and liquidity management for retail and corporate banking and will enable a unified customer experience across multiple channels while leveraging multi-country and multi-entity capabilities.

Additionally, NBB is looking to collaborate and integrate with the emerging ecosystem of FinTechs in the region's banking and financial industry by leveraging TCS BaNCS' open APIs,



NBB selects "TCS BaNCS" to power core banking transformation

digitalised workflows, and cognitive capabilities. Iain Blacklaw, Chief Operating Officer, NBB, believes the move will modernise its IT landscape, lay a strong foundation for digitalisation and offer a 'consistent and contextual experience to our customers'. "Our goal is to unlock new revenue streams by leveraging larger and extended ecosystems, introduce new products quickly and expand our customer base across multiple countries in the region," he added.

Designed on the 'Digital First, Cloud First' philosophy, it comes with a high performing processing engine and open banking capabilities.



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Today (April 10)

Every Wednesday is 'Wings and Wisdom' night at Big Texas Barbeque & Waffle House inside Best Western Plus - The Olive Hotel. It's a quiz night with an added bonus of BD10net for 'all-you-can-eat' chicken wings. Call 17360063 for details.

The Swiss-Belhotel Seef Bahrain is hosting a Mediterranean Lunch every day except Friday and Saturday, from 12.30pm-3pm at Swiss-Café. Priced BD6net per person, BD3net for children aged six to 12, and free for those under six. For details, call 66310000.

The Sheraton Hotel Bahrain hosts an evening of live music at An Nada Lounge by the Caribbean Girls band every day except Saturday. This takes place from 8.30pm-12.30am during weekdays and from 8.30pm-1.30am during weekends. Call 17533533 for details.



The Sheraton Hotel Bahrain is also hosting a special lunch and dinner promotion at Al Safir Restaurant for BD10+++. For details, contact 17533533.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's famous steak night starts from 7pm at La Mosaïque Restaurant, priced BD18net. For details, contact 17531122.

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-11pm, and weekends from 11.30am to midnight. For reservations, contact 17115500.

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. For details, call 13110110.

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. For details, call 13110110.

Enjoy Sushi-Meshi at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's Thai with 50 per cent savings on select sushi and beverages. For details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com

Le Meridien City Centre Bahrain's Baharat restaurant hosts a BBQ night every Wednesday featuring ribs and wagyu prime rib steak as well as music from Twin Band from 7pm-11pm. The BBQ buffet inclusive of soft drinks and water is BD19net and inclusive of free flow beverages it is BD26net. For details, contact 17171144.

Tomorrow (April 11)

Big Texas Barbeque & Waffle House hosts Thursday Night Lights from 7pm-9pm. This event showcases local and international musicians in Bahrain. Don't miss American country legend Rusty Golden performing live every Thursday through to Sunday. Call 17360063 for details.



Indulge in a variety of seafood from fresh oysters to sushi and Lobster Thermidor at Le Meridien City Centre Bahrain's Baharat restaurant every Thursday from 7pm to 11pm. The buffet is

priced BD25net, including soft drinks and water, or BD31net inclusive of selected beverages. For details, contact 17171144.

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain hosts a BBQ night every Thursday at Bar de La Plage from 7pm to 11pm. It's priced BD20net per person inclusive of soft drinks or BD30net per person with select beverages. For details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com



At Jumeirah Royal Saray's Al Hadiqa Pool & Beach outlet, treat yourself to a dinner buffet from 7.30pm to midnight offering a wide variety of dishes from seafood, sushi and meat-carving stations to a divine desserts display while breathing the fresh sea breeze and listening to a Cuban live band. The price is BD22net per person, including soft drinks and BD32net per person including selected beverages.

Friday (April 12)

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is hosting Friday Brunch at CUT by Wolfgang Puck Steakhouse from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. Priced BD32net per person including soft beverages, BD32net person including extensive beverage package for ladies, and BD34net per person

Leisure Guide



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



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.



At the InterContinental Regency Bahrain's Elements outlet, join in the popular salsa nights with the kingdom's finest dancers. It takes place every Friday from 8pm-midnight.

Big Texas Barbeque & Waffle House presents its 'Small Town, Throw Down' brunch – the only five-hour brunch in the kingdom – from 11am-4pm. It features a buffet and specific table orders. There's also karaoke. Call 17360063 for details.

Bahrain's Sweetest Brunch takes place every Friday from 12.30pm-4pm at Le Meridien City Centre Bahrain's Baharat restaurant. Enjoy the award-winning sweet and savoury experience for BD28net

including soft drinks and water, or BD40net including selected beverages. Live music from Twin Band accompanies the fare. Book for 10 people or more and receive 20 per cent discount. Call 17171144.

Saturday (April 13)

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's Pearl of Arabia-themed night takes place from 7pm at La Mosaïque Restaurant, priced BD13net, with a special beverages package available too. For details, contact 17531122.

Spice up your weekly brunch with a culinary journey around Mexico at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's Cantina Kahlo Restaurant. This will be held from noon to 4pm. Priced BD36.5net per person with selected beverages and BD23net per person with soft beverages.

For more details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.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 Asian Cuisine by Wolfgang Puck's Saturday Brunch. The price is BD31.500net and

BD43.600net with selected beverages. For reservations, contact 17115046.

Families can enjoy a buffet meal at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's La Med Restaurant every Saturday from noon to 3.30pm. The price is BD19 per person. For details, contact 17586499.

**Sunday (April 14)**

Le Meridien City Centre Bahrain's Baharat restaurant features a buffet concept-style business lunch offering a selection of Middle Eastern and Indian fusion cuisine from Sunday to Thursday from 12.30pm-3pm. There is also a tandoor oven and indoor grill. The lunch buffet is priced BD16net, the soup and salad buffet costs BD7net and children aged six to 12 dine at half price. Children under the age of six dine for free. For details, contact 17171144.



Enjoy Sundown Grill at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's Plums from 7pm to 11.30pm every Sunday.

Satisfy your steak cravings with US Black Angus, Australian Kobe Wagyu and Irish grass-fed served with a side salad, truffle fries, creamed spinach and sautéed mushrooms for BD38net per person, inclusive of one grape beverage. For more details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com



Monday (April 15)

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's Pazzi Per La Pasta at Primavera, will offer a special set menu, including five signature Italian dishes that can be shared by up to four guests, cooked up by Chef Vincenzo Nigro from 7pm to 11pm. The dinner is every Monday and priced at BD34net per set. For more details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurantreservations@ritzcarlton.com

Tuesday (April 16)

The Gulf Night Out is back! Every Tuesday, experience the great buffet festival

at the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Conference & Spa, featuring live entertainment and numerous other surprises. The cost is BD19+++ For more information, call 17713000.

Every Tuesday, Big Texas Barbeque & Waffle House inside Best Western Plus - The Olive Hotel hosts an authentic Tex-Mex cuisine with Latin entertainment from 5pm-midnight. Each week there are various food and beverage specials to keep things fresh. Call 17360063 for more details.

Every Tuesday, men

can visit Havana Club at Jumeirah Royal Saray between 8pm-midnight and enjoy your first drink on the house while grooving to the rhythm of a live band trio from Cuba.

Ladies Night at the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa every Tuesday, where women receive a 50 per cent discount for the hotel's lounges, spas and restaurants, excluding Raosi by Vineet.

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

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.

Enjoy Taco Tuesdays at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's Cantina Kahlo from 6pm to 10pm. Choose from 10 varieties of tacos for BD22net per person. It's also inclusive of one selected beverage. For more details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurantreservations@ritzcarlton.com

SPRING OF CULTURE**April 12**

• Daffy and Flipperachi joined by DJ Outlaw and Saudi rapper Lil Eazy, Bahrain Bay, 5pm.

April 20

• Traditional Fisheries Bahrain Fort Site Museum, 9am to 11am.

April 27

• Day of Photography, Memory of the Place: Bin Mattar House, Full Day.

For the full schedule of events visit www.springofculture.org or @springofculture on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Youtube, or call 39900630.

**DATES FOR THE DIARY****White Beach Party**

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay will be staging a white beach party on April 19 from 2pm to midnight to open the summer season. It's priced BD10 for ladies, BD15 for men and BD250 net per table including one premium bottle and mixers. For details, contact 17115500.

Easter Brunch

Hop on over to the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay to feast on a grand Easter brunch on April 19 and April 21 from 1pm to 4pm at the Bahrain Bay Kitchen. The menu will include Easter favourites as well as an egg hunt for children.

It is priced BD35net inclusive of soft drinks and BD45.5net inclusive of selected special beverages. Children under the age of five eat for free and those between the ages of six and 12 get 50 per cent discount. For details, call 17115500.

Easter Brunch

Celebrate Easter on April 19 at Le Meridien City Centre Bahrain's Baharat from 12.30pm-4pm. It is priced at BD 28net inclusive of soft drinks and water or BD40net including selected free flow beverages. There will be live music from the Twin Band. For details, contact 17171144.

Making trash into treasure

AFTER last year's huge success, the Art for Autism Awareness event has returned to include, enable and inspire children of all ages to reach their potential to mark Autism Awareness month, writes Kristian Harrison.

The Trash to Treasure event is themed around T-shirt upcycling to highlight how we can include the environment in our actions.

It continues today from 4pm-6pm and will end tomorrow from 9am-11am in the Central Atrium on the second floor of Harbour Gate in the Bahrain Financial Harbour.

Secondhand, damaged and unwanted T-shirts will be transformed by participants into a 5m x 1.5m artwork designed by volunteer artists Bahraini Mohammed Mirza Ali Taha and Madu Sarda from Nepal.

Children can also make bags, toys and other items out of unwanted T-shirts. The event highlights the 20th anniversary of the RIA Institute Bahrain, an inclusive education centre in Adliya that caters to the needs of students with special needs. Set up in 1999 by singer



MATERIAL MATTERS: The T-shirt art taking shape and, top right, the British ambassador watches the volunteers in action

Christine Gordon and her husband, Dr Emad El-Attar, a chemist and fellow musician, it has grown from humble beginnings with seven youngsters to an operation catering for between 70 and 140 students.

"Reflecting on 20 years, it's really a wake-up call because how we started out was like climbing Mount Everest," Christine, now director of student services at RIA told *GulfWeekly* earlier. "We are almost at the top but you know what happens when you

get to the top, people can get too complacent and crash and burn on the way down. We still have to remember what our mission is and that is to build an inclusive society."

The attendees, aged two to 23, are assisted by a team of 17 trained and certified staff members. RIA last year moved to a two-storey villa featuring a garden, an outdoor play area, a swimming pool, seven classrooms and a kitchen.

Since its inception, more than 1,500 families have

been helped by its services.

"I think people would be shocked if I told them how 20 years ago, people didn't want to mix their children with other kids that were differently abled," added Christine, a mother-of-three, whose son, Othmann, now 23, is autistic.

"I was determined that parents would not experience the trauma that I had when my son was kicked out of pre-school because he was different. Honestly, I should thank the lady who did it



really, because without her, I wouldn't have been so dedicated to educating others and enabling my son and other students with disabilities to merge into society and not care what people think. Now, it makes me proud to see people with disabilities being allowed to get access to mainstream education and skill-based training."

Sarah Clarke, one of the organisers of the event, said: "We all have unique abilities which we are celebrating this week.

"Thank you to the management and staff of the Harbour Gate, especially CEO of the BFH Holding company Angus Campbell, for their ongoing support in hosting this event and our sponsors BMMI and Wildabout Art and supporters Cactus and Paint & Palette."

Also during the event, visitors can paint and draw part of a collage will celebrates inclusivity and includes three camels – a mother, father and child. Sarah explained: "Art speaks when words fail, and through this fun T-shirt upcycling event we hope to convey that message.

"At the same time, we want to show how we can minimise our impact on the environment – it takes 2,700 litres of water to make one T-shirt – that's enough for one person to drink for 900 days!

"So each choice we make about the T-shirts we buy and discard cumulatively has a big impact on our collective environmental footprint. We all have a T-shirt with a hole in it, a mark on it, that's faded or out of style or just plain ugly – think before you just leave it at the back of your wardrobe and go and buy another one."

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Fashion Weekly

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

Jalal's timely tips on the latest trends



WHEN Bollywood divas hit the stage together they generally bring down the house!

That was precisely what happened when three of the Hindi film industry's most sought-after superstars were pictured wearing exclusive Roger Dubuis timepieces at a photo-shoot.

Sizzling on the cover of the *Harper's Bazaar India* magazine, was Madhuri Dixit, Sonakshi Sinha and Alia Bhatt – three of the most bankable superstars that rule the multi-million dollar world

that is Hindi cinema today.

They represent three different generations. The shoot also celebrated the release of the film *Kalank*, which features all three actresses in prominent roles. The watches that sat pretty on the actresses' wrists were from the Roger Dubuis Excalibur and Velvet ranges.

Madhuri has appeared in acting and dancing roles in many hit films of the 1980s and 1990s and the Indian government awarded her with the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honour of the country.



Sonakshi is the daughter of actors Shatrughun Sinha and Poonam Sinha and made her

acting debut in the action-drama film *Dabangg* opposite Salman Khan, which won her the Filmfare Award for best debutant female.

And, Alia, the daughter of filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt and actress Soni Razdan, is one of the nation's highest-paid contemporary actresses. Her 2018 spy thriller *Raazi* emerged as one of Hindi cinema's biggest-earning female-led films, following which Bhatt starred in the musical drama *Gully Boy*, her highest-grossing release yet.



Cool look for music festivals

IT'S about that time again when the hottest summer trends will be highlighted at the world's biggest annual arts and music festival of the year – Coachella.

The annual Californian event will feature an impressive line-up of acts this year including Childish Gambino, Ariana Grande, Solange and J Balvin and will attract the coolest party-goers.

Females in Friday's Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival crowd usually wear fringe, sheer shirts and tiny shorts, with other hippie, bohemian styles coming to the fore.

Here are some helpful style tips to ensure *FashionWeekly* readers fit in with the A crowd ... wherever they're partying this summer.

● Boho babe

Bring out the feminine bohemian within by wearing a white tiered dress and carrying a jute bag, which is made using the second most important vegetable fibre after cotton. Slit maxi skirts and dresses also give off a gypsy vibe. Remember to keep it light, airy and versatile to make it easier to dance and move around in. Rompers and jump suits are still popular but remember, it's no fun having to visit the bathroom in one of those things.

● Work it out

Ath-leisure is a trend in which clothing designed



FASHION
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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for workouts and other athletic activities is worn in other settings, such as at the workplace, at school, or at other casual or social occasions. It's all the rage right now, especially as women can look comfy while making a statement. Think crisscross body suit with a pale denim skirt to keep you cool and active as the temperatures soar. Pair the look with heels for a touch of drama or sneakers to keep your feet cushy while dancing the day away.

● Crochet all the way

Who says crochet wearables like hats, scarves and sweaters are just made for winter. Many models and celebrities are making crochet festival-worthy with rainbow crochet shorts, kimonos and dresses. Pair a crop top to crochet shorts or a kimono over a mini dress.

● Pretty prints

Channel your inner hipster with florals, geometric patterns, mandalas and tie dye colours in maxi skirts and dresses, tops or wrap-around palazzo pants.

● Awesome accessories

Sassy sunglasses, large totes and crochet bags, oversized jewellery, headbands and hats can add pizzazz to the hippy looks. Also, don't forget that sun screen. As for shoes, think sandals, gladiators, trainers, slouchy boots, ankle boots and zip-ups.



Eating Out

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

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Lights are shining brightly

THE holy month is soon approaching and The Crowne Plaza Bahrain became the first five star property in the kingdom to display its culinary offerings with a pre-Ramadan reception for members of the media and special guests.

Executive Chef David Miras, right, and his team of chefs have pulled out all the stops to entice families and corporate bookers to its conference centre with an impressive range of Arabic favourites and international cuisine delights.

The conference centre and ballroom has once again been transformed into a traditional tented triumph of design, comfort and style, with a beautifully-lit entrance.

For the very first time its designers have created secluded seating for families and, to add a special twist to the offering, alongside the delicious flavours and relaxed ambience, daily and weekly rewards will be given away – from dinner vouchers to electronic goods – as part of the spirit of giving.

The 'island buffet' started with popular Ramadan juices and dried fruits, including everyone's favourite Vimto, alongside Lumen with Mint and Rose Milk, always ideal for that first taste of refreshment after a full day of fasting, broken too by energising bites into dates, figs, dried apricots and a handful of walnuts.

The spread of cold messeh, which included a superb Green Beans Lebanese-style Salad and crisp international salad dishes, was impressive



GOURMET REPORT
By STAN SZECOWKA
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and the chefs, waiting and set-up crew should also take a bow as a result of the impressive display and arrangements of the dishes.

Eating out is so much more than just the food, the visual impact plays an important role, in my opinion, and little touches of excellence make all the difference. It displays care and a desire to please and brings a smile to the face and that's exactly what the cute crafted camels placed in prominent positions

and the heart-shaped display of spectacular sushi were guaranteed to deliver.

The hot messeh included a superb Spinach Fatayer and Cheese Sambousek and crowds of hungry hacks quickly descended on the live Chicken Shawarma station. The Lamb Ouzi, a whole lamb slowly cooked with oriental rice and yoghurt and served with cucumber raita, was majestic and a crowd favourite, of course.

Indian dishes, such as Prawn Biryani and Mutton Malala, looked tempting but I had my eye on the Arabic mixed grill with Shish Kebab

and the most amazing Lamb Chops.

Those with a sweet tooth will not be disappointed and my standout desserts were the Vanilla Profiteroles and the Chocolate Mousse Verrine and you can't miss the crazy Turkish ice-cream magicians dishing up their delights with bell-ringing, twist and turning artistic flair. The children (and big kids like me) absolutely love it.

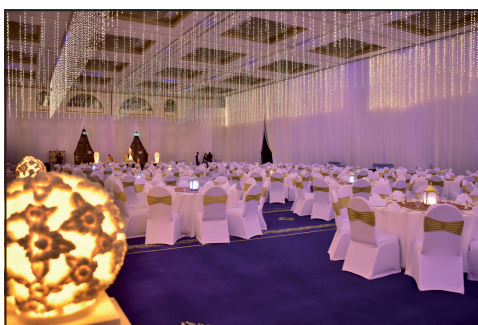
Crowne Plaza Bahrain also aims to provide the 'perfect atmosphere' with special menus that can be tailor-made to host both corporate or private Iftar and Ghabga

events, said general manager Gilles Nicolas, below left.

"We have created a plush ambience with specialised menus that can cater to your very own exclusive event, where events from 30 up to 1,000 may be accommodated in private rooms," he added. As Ramadan is a time of giving, this year the Crowne Plaza Bahrain will be making donations to the Children and Women's Wellness Charity.

● Enjoy the lavish Iftar buffet featuring Ramadan delicacies, live-cooking stations and a delightful array of mouthwatering desserts served daily at

sunset. Priced at BD 12+,. The little ones will be taken care of at the 'Kids Corner' where children under six dine free, and those up to 14 pay half price. For bookings and more information, call 17531122, or email info.cpbahrain@ihg.com



Winning notes and



MUSIC lovers from across the kingdom flocked to Atrium Mall in Saar to cheer on the kingdom's local vocal talents including aspiring artists who were recently crowned 'The Vocalists' in a popular singing competition.

Age category winners such as schoolgirls Jennika Bangunan, 11, and Lydia Wapshaka, 16, took to the outdoor stage alongside 18 other performers, aged from seven to 30.

The musical event was organised by The Butterfly Effect and Voxshop Bahrain Music Institute and staged courtesy of Lulu Hypermarket, the mall and Nandos, following the successful singing competition offering contestants a platform to hone their skills and showcase their talents on a national scale.

Anita Menon, the managing director of The Butterfly Effect, said: "It was a stupendous success. We had 20 performers, including some of the winners of The Vocalist age categories wooing the audience with their amazing voices. It gave me and my team such joy and a great sense of pride to see them perform once again.

"I feel the competition has succeeded in giving them a platform to move ahead and explore new opportunities as performers."

Jennika, a British School of Bahrain (BSB) pupil, won the final of the seven to 11 age category singing *On my Own* from the musical *Les Misérables*. She took home \$400 and will have three vocal sessions with Fred Edwin, founder and voice coach of Voxshop.

"It feels amazing," said Jennika who lives in Sanabis. "I couldn't sleep, rethinking that winning moment over and over again. I'm still showing a smile that pinches the corners of my cheeks!"

"As one of the semi-finalists, I was thrilled at the point that I couldn't stop talking about it. It was so exciting to have been chosen. But, when I made it to the finals, I realised that I was almost there and all I needed to do was try my hardest and aim high."

Her dad, Genesis Ramos Bangunan, a solutions architect at Ericsson Telecoms, and mum, Quennie, cheered her on at the final along with family and friends who attend their church.

She said: "They were all extremely supportive and some of them seemed even more excited than me! They were all congratulating me once my name was announced and were

STAR TURNS: Majda with the big cheque prize, right, on stage, and, below, Jenika and Lydia and performers in Saar



COMMUNITY REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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so proud, screaming my name.

"I felt so loved and my mum and dad posted it on Facebook for all our relatives in the Philippines to see. Everyone had started buzzing with excitement."

Jennika heard about the competition from her mother who spotted an advertisement and asked if she wanted to audition.

She took a weekly vocal lesson although she enjoys signing every day because she simply loves it. Before singing lessons with BSB teacher Natallia Estenon, she had trained with three teachers from church – Marilou Clavencia, Frauline Villa and Anna Mabalot, who are all renowned soprano singers and music majors.

Her father believed she had star potential when she first burst into song at the tender age of three. "My father's passion for singing inspired me and he was my first mentor," she said. "I was always watching him singing bass in a church choir. He still sings in the same choir today!"

She wowed the judges during the auditions with her version of *Think of Me* from the *Phantom of the Opera* musical. In the semi-finals, she sang *The Little Mermaid's Part of that World* because she adores Disney songs.

At the moment, Jennika says she has no expectations at all but

will definitely continue honing her singing skills. "I'm looking forward to learning and having vocal sessions with coach Fred. I'd like to thank God first of all, for blessing me with this talent, to my supportive family, my seven-year-old brother, Sean, and all my friends who prayed for me throughout this experience.

"The Vocalist – 'thank you' for this opportunity it was a fun journey. It was a pleasure having all of these people who

enjoyed my performance and cheered me on, as I was only doing what I loved doing."

Lydia, from Amwaj Islands, also won a similar prize package and is eager to continue down a musical path. She described the competition as 'really tough'. She's looking forward to more specialist vocal coaching. "This is yet another good opportunity for me to improve myself as a musician," she said.

Lydia, from Nigeria, sang Rihanna's *Russian Roulette*



musical splendour



during the auditions and was shocked and delighted to pick up her prize. "I was so sure my nerves had gotten too much in the way of my audition," she explained, "but getting to the final was a whole other story. It was so exhilarating."

At the semi-final stage she sang Bruno Mars's hit and in the grand finale at the Bahrain Rugby Football Club, she performed I Was Here by Beyonce.

Her parents, Isiaqu, an aircraft

engineer and Amina, a fashion designer, were with her every step of the way. "My parents are very open-minded with my music and let me take charge for the most part," she said.

"When I won, my mum screamed and hugged me – I think she even cried a little. My dad tried to act cool but I could see he was just as proud."

St Christopher's School pupil Lydia has four sisters – Priscilla, 20, Phoebe, 13, Ruth, nine, and baby Hannah.

She says she takes after her big sister and her mum. "I have always loved to sing and growing up with a musical big sister, but I started performing publicly when my teacher in Year 6 happened to hear my voice and pushed me to perform on French Day.

"Looking back, I'm particularly grateful to her because I doubt that I would have performed in public otherwise. I also think I take after my mum because of our shared love for the performing arts, and I happen to look the most like her.

"I've mostly had my mum guiding me. I took a few lessons with Italian opera singer Ivana Padovano before she left Bahrain and although it was for a very short period it gave me an insight into some more technical points of singing."

She is an active member of her school choir which meets three days a week, as well as with her church's music ministry.

The adult Vocalist winner, Majda Shanta, 23, unfortunately could not perform on Friday due to studying for her exams at RCSL-Medical University of Bahrain.

She lives in Busaiteen with her roommate Dr Nada Errayes who has been 'like a sister' during her six years living in the kingdom.

Her parents, a pilot and a teacher, and five siblings live in a neighbouring Gulf state. She always thought she was a good singer as she started at a young age, performing usually in

morning assembly and summer camp. Her uncle plays the oud and inspired her to appreciate music.

She also spends time jamming with her friends at university and its associated music club. She practiced singing Adele's *Someone Like You* on the car journey to the auditions and at the semi-final stage delivered another song from the British star called *Don't you Remember*.

"It felt honestly amazing," she explained. "I did not expect it at all. I knew I was kind of good at singing, but good enough to reach the finals? Never!"

In the final, she delivered a stunning version of *I Surrender* by Celine Dion but was still stunned that she won. "It all felt like a dream," Majda said. "The rush you get after hearing your name makes it all worthwhile."

"I won \$1,000 but that wasn't what mattered, having my friends around and seeing how happy we all were, was the best part! My amazing friends were there from the auditions all way through to the final."

She would also like to give a special mention to her friend and unofficial vocal coach Abdulmuhsen Basha and another friend, Dr Mohammed Toorani.

"Honestly, winning wouldn't have felt this good if it wasn't for the people surrounding me," she said. Now, Majda is pressing pause on any musical aspirations to pursue her medical dreams of becoming a qualified doctor.



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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

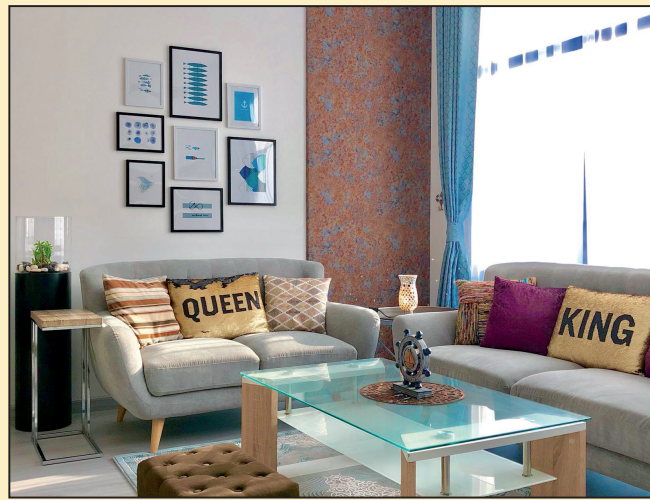
Tower home with a terrace

A STYLISHLY-DESIGNED fully-furnished apartment is up for sale in RM Kooheji Group's 27-storey Nasmah Star Tower situated in the heart of Juffair.

The two bedroom apartment, which has a total built-up area of 115sqm, boasts scenic city views, includes a spacious living and dining room, a kitchen, as well as two bathrooms.

The apartment also features a terrace overlooking the area and state-of-the-art facilities on the third floor. There is a swimming pool, a gym, a games room with a pool table and a steam room and sauna. Each apartment has been allocated one parking space.

The tower consists of two and three bedroom apartments including two-bedroom duplex bedroom units. The much sought-after complex is located in the popular bustling coastal district close to a range of malls, restaurants and supermarkets.



FACTS AT A GLANCE

Location: Nasmah Star, Juffair

Reference number: AP853

Sale price: BD75,000

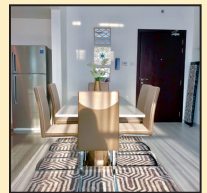
Living room: 1

Bedrooms: 2

Bathrooms: 2

Additional information: There is a roof top swimming pool, a fitness centre, a pool table, steam and sauna.

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



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InteriorsWeekly

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



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COFFEE tables are staple pieces that tend to pull furniture design together to complete one pretty picture in the home.

It's also where many conversations take place whilst families and friends sip their hot brews and put down their cups in between laughter.

Some people decorate their centre and side-tables with plants and little ornate trinkets while others leave books, magazines and candles on display.

Coffee tables have a unique place in the heart of a living room and there are endless table trends that can be snapped up. However, tables vary in materials, size and shapes ... so what's the best look and feel for your home?

Carol Sukkar from Home and Soul Dubai shared her top tips with *InteriorsWeekly* on how to select a dream piece of furniture.

Let's table a new notion



● **What's your flavour:** What material catches your eye? Marble is quite trendy this season being both stylish and sophisticated. Marble can

integrate beautifully into the decor and complements any colour palette beautifully

● **Choose a shape that fits:** Round, oval, square or

rectangular? The shape should fit your room structure and style without overpowering it

● **Is it a match?** A marble coffee table will fit into almost



any living room and bring a light, laid-back almost any living room. The gold finishing will help give the dining area a regal and polished look.

Interior designers also suggest oxidised oak, which is a blackened version of tried and true white oak, for its grounding and comforting properties.

Glass coffee tables still look



pretty and help make a room look bigger. However, from experience, it can be a dust magnet.

Curved coffee tables in different geometric forms are also appealing as they stand out like works of art. Don't be afraid to mix and match or purchase a set of three in different sizes.

Happy shopping and chatting.

SocialScene

In focus



AMERICAN Mission Hospital conducted free health checks for the elderly at the UCO Elderly Care in Hidd.



THE British Club Bahrain recently held a charity golf tournament at the Royal Golf Club and raised BD6,531 for the Al Sanabel Orphans Care Society. More than 100 players took part in the scramble, which was followed by a presentation to the winners and an auction. Team Krossy won the event (Paul Millington, Rusty Watson, Samy Lebbaal & Eric Jansen) with a net score of 55.1, closely followed by runners-up Team British Club Juniors (Kian Higgins, Sebastian Woodrow & Ronan Smith) with a net score of 57.5. Platinum sponsors were Porsche Bahrain, ID Works and Havelock One. Seen here presenting the donation to the society's Arif Sanad are Brit Club chairman Chris Woodrow, Mark Price from Porsche Bahrain, Neil Dawson from ID Works and Jason Higgins of Havelock One.

Outreach programme



AN American Mission Hospital medical team held a community outreach programme at the Basma Centre for Special Education offering health checks and dental screening for the children.

Food market



GALLERIA Mall recently staged a food market by its tenant restaurants in support of the Royal Charity Organisation's Al Faris Project which donates insulin pumps to diabetic orphans and children. Batool Dadabhai of Galleria Mall is seen here handing a donation to Yusuf Abdulla Yusuf Al Yaqoob, assistant secretary general for planning & charity resources development, and Abdulla Hassan Fardan, the RCO's head of public relations.

Earth Hour



NADEEN School pupils participated in environmental competitions with hotel guests, visitors and staff members as The Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa, joined the rest of the world to switch off all non-essential lights within the property for one hour to honour the annual Earth Hour initiative.

Planting Day



Sheraton Bahrain Hotel team showed its support for World Planting Day by digging deep and placing new trees at the front of the property as part of the Marriott Serve 360 initiative. "We believe everyone has a global responsibility and opportunity to do little things to protect the environment," said hotel GM Thomas Flindt.

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In focus



BIN Faqeeh Real Estate Investment Company recently reached an agreement to open the first StayBridge Suites Hotel in Bahrain in partnership with InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG).

The signing ceremony was attended by the investment company's chairman Faisal Faqeeh and GM Abdulrahman Al Kooheji and Pascal Gauvin, MD, India, Middle East & Africa - IHG, in the presence of Shaikh Khaled bin Humood Al Khalifa, CEO of Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority. The hotel is set to open early next year.



LUCKY Dr Ahmed Jasim Jamal won a luxury furnished apartment in Durrat Marina, the latest grand prize in the Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain Libshara Savings Account Draw.

He received the keys to the seaside residence from Subah Al Zayani, deputy head of Retail Banking Group at KFH.



BUDAIYA Pre-School's recent annual Family Fun Day at the school premises in Saar raised BD800 to be shared between special school projects and its adopted charity SNEHA, the Indian Ladies Association project which provides care and education for special needs children of all nationalities.



URBAN developers Diyar Al Muharraq has signed an agreement with ERA Projects. As part of the deal, ERA Projects will acquire a parcel of land to develop a residential community with Diyar Al Muharraq. The freehold properties will be launched in the second half of 2019.

The signing ceremony took place between the CEO of Diyar Al Muharraq, Dr Maher Al Shaer and the CEO of Era Projects Abdulhussain Khudhur.

SocialScene

Why wait a month! Join Social Scene every week

Bowled over



THE eighth Inter Hotel Charity Cricket Tournament has been launched at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain and this year will be the biggest ever with 28 teams from 25 hotels taking part. All proceeds from the event will be donated to the official charity partner, Alia Centre for Early Intervention.

Opening ceremony



MINT Trading Partners executives opened its latest Man'ousheh Street restaurant branch at Atruim Mall, Saar, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony under the patronage of her Shaikha Hind bint Salman Al Khalifa. Dani-Jan Gisquel Billington, Mint's operations directors welcome the VIPS and members of the media. The diner features classic Lebanese favourites.

Germany calling



THE Rotary Club of Salmaniya held its regular lunch meeting at the Golden Tulip Hotel with guest speaker, German ambassador Kai Boeckmann, highlighting the close relationship between his country and Bahrain.

Winter Ball



MORE than 400 students, staff and guests of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - Medical University of Bahrain (RCSI Bahrain) descended on the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain for the annual Winter Ball. Traditionally one of the most popular events on the university's social calendar, the Winter Ball gave a chance for students to take a break from their studies, dress up and socialise with their peers. This year's gala event featured a DJ, magician as well as prize draws and a photobooth.

Poolside brunch



DRAGON Hotel & Resort unveiled its new Friday Poolside Brunch to members of the media. The resort, along with Sea Loft Chalets, is now operated under new management.

Film Weekly



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

So sweet



SHAZAM! is DC's most joyful and sweet movie since the days of Christopher Reeve's *Superman*, a funny yet earnest coming-of-age story about a boy who learns that, well, with great power comes great responsibility.

So obviously, *Shazam!* doesn't reinvent the superhero wheel, but it's an undeniably fun time that left me wanting more big-screen adventures with these charming characters.

Where *Wonder Woman* bore the weight of expectations as the first major modern female superhero film and *Aquaman* had a load of world-building (and redemption) to do, *Shazam!* is saddled with no such heavy, external burdens.

It's thus able to be as carefree as a child, to just have fun despite having to inevitably grow up and confront some very adult concerns along the way. Namely, how streetwise orphan Billy Batson must accept responsibility for his behaviour if he's going to prove truly worthy of the magical gifts bestowed upon him.

Able played as never too obnoxious nor too earnest by Asher Angel, Billy is a good kid at heart who's largely been mistreated by others. The film largely remarks or rejects the choices adults make that impact a child's emotional development. At the same time, it's ultimately up to the child to decide whether they turn out kind or unkind.

The key message of *Shazam!* is that it's gravely important how adults treat children, whether it's through remarks or rejections or the choices adults make that impact a child's emotional development. At the same time, it's ultimately up to the child to decide whether they turn out kind or unkind.

Billy is a flawed character who screws up, but it's in watching him learn from his mistakes that we grow to legitimately care about him. The film largely avoids the maudlin and manipulative when it comes to this story of a 14-year-old boy seeking answers, his way in the world, and finding

SHAZAM!

STARRING: Zachary Levi, Mark Strong, Asher Angel

DIRECTOR: David F. Sandberg

GENRE: Superhero

RATING: PG-15

RUNTIME: 132 Mins



the true meaning of home among a misfit foster family.

The movie nicely provides a rarely seen positive depiction of foster care, as the most recent family to take Billy in are legitimately good people who truly want the best for him. Of this family – which includes the adorable, but not overly precocious younger sister Darla (Faithe Herman) – the character with the most development is Billy's foster house roommate Freddie (wonderful scene-stealer Jack Dylan Grazer), whose skills as an in-universe DC fanboy help him fill the mentor role for our fledgling and decidedly un-geeky superhero. Freddie and Billy/Shazam's friendship is the heart of this movie and it doesn't squander their often hilarious interactions as two kids playing with fire taken from the gods.

But none of the above would matter if the centre of the movie, its key performer, was weak; thankfully, that isn't the case here. Zachary Levi is perfect as Shazam. He's hilarious, heart-warming and completely believable as a 14-year-old boy trapped in a muscle-bound superhero's body, excelling in both the action scenes as well as in the

more vulnerable moments. I could never imagine anyone else in the role after watching Levi here, and his comedic chemistry with Grazer is spot-on.

They make for a great buddy act, with each – as real friends or brothers might – complementing the other's strengths while also schooling them on their weaknesses.

This isn't an action movie per se but a coming-of-age comedy with some action in it. There are some very funny, very knowing superhero moments to be had as Billy/Shazam, documented by Freddie, discovers the range of his newfound powers. These are the scenes where the movie shines brightest, poking fun at all the superhero movie tropes even if nothing much of consequence happens.

But once Billy/Shazam realises he can use his powers for more than just cheap tricks, his true hero's journey begins.

Mark Strong wisely underplays his role as the villainous Dr Thaddeus Sivana, and his character has a sympathetic, relatable motivation for his fall from grace, but Sivana's master plan proves underwhelming.

While it's appreciated that there wasn't an overtly (and overdone) 'save the world' plot in play here, Sivana is basically a villain from a *Mummy* movie, right down to his monstrous minions, whose retrograde visual effects quality is almost forgivable given the throwback nature of the movie.

Sivana serves his purpose as Billy's foil well enough, but you'll likely be hard-pressed to recall him when mulling the great comic book movie supervillains.

Shazam! is a lot of fun and it further proves how, in the wake of the success of *Wonder Woman* and *Aquaman*, DC's movie future is indeed bright.

● Now showing in all Bahrain's cinemas.

KRISTIAN'S VERDICT



1 popcorn – stay home
5 popcorns – start queuing

Bite-sized trailer

Pet Sematary

DIRECTORS: Kevin Kölsch, Dennis Widmyer

CAST: Jason Clarke, Amy Seimetz, John Lithgow

PLOT: Dr. Louis Creed and his wife, Rachel, relocate from Boston to rural Maine with their two young children. The couple soon discover a mysterious burial ground hidden deep in the woods near their new home.

SHOWING IN: City Centre, Wadi Al Sail, Seef II, Saar, Oasis Juffair, The Avenues, Juffair Mall, Novo, Cinopolis



The Etruscan Smile

DIRECTORS: Oded Binnun, Mihal Brezis

CAST: JJ Feild, Thora Birch, Rosanna Arquette

PLOT: This stars acclaimed British actor Brian Cox as Rory MacNeil, a rugged old Scotsman who reluctantly leaves his beloved isolated Hebridean island and travels to San Francisco to seek medical treatment. Moving in with his estranged son, Rory sees his life transformed through a newly-found bond with his baby grandson.

SHOWING IN: Seef II, Novo



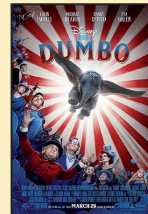
Dumbo

DIRECTOR: Tim Burton

CAST: Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito

PLOT: Holt was once a circus star, but he went off to war and when he returned it had terribly altered him. Circus owner Max Medici (Danny DeVito) hires him to take care of Dumbo, a newborn elephant whose oversized ears make him the laughing stock of the struggling circus troupe. But when Holt's children discover that Dumbo can fly, silver-tongued entrepreneur V.A. Vandevere (Michael Keaton), and aerial artist Colette Marchant (Eva Green) swoop in to make the little elephant a star.

SHOWING IN: City Centre, Seef II, Wadi Al Sail, Oasis Juffair, Novo, Juffair Mall, The Avenues, Cinopolis



imdb movie charts

Current Position	Title	Weekend Takings	Gross to date
1	Shazam!	\$54M	\$57M
2	Pet Sematary	\$25M	\$25M
3	Dumbo	\$18M	\$76M
4	Us	\$14M	\$152M
5	Captain Marvel	\$13M	\$374M
6	The Best of Enemies	\$5M	\$5M
7	Five Feet Apart	\$4M	\$42M
8	Unplanned	\$3M	\$13M
9	Wonder Park	\$2M	\$42M
10	How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World	\$2M	\$2M



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FLYING HIGH: Bahrain jets in the sky and, right, HH Brigadier Shaikh Nasser



PREPARATIONS have begun for BIDECE 2019, one of the region's key International defence exhibitions with key partners confirming participation.

Following the outstanding success of the first Bahrain International Defence Exhibition & Conference (BIDECE) in 2017, keen interest for the next edition scheduled for 28-30 October 28-30, 2019 has begun to build as major international defence and security organisations join forces to support what has been hailed as one of the most strategic events of its kind in the region.

Held under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad, HH Brigadier Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Commander of Bahrain Royal Guard and chairman of BIDECE 2019 has been the force behind the success of the event.

Fully supported by Bahrain Defence Force, BIDECE 2019 will have continued government support from all functions, including specially selected committees within the BDF, Naval Force, Air Force, Royal Guard, National Guard and other government divisions.

Lockheed Martin, the well-known global aerospace, defense, security and advanced technologies company, have confirmed their participation as Gold Sponsor for the show, indicating its continued support to the kingdom.

BIDECE 2019 will once again be organised by Clarion Events, the largest organiser of defence and security events in the world and Faalyat, a Bahrain-based events agency.

BIDECE 2019 offers exhibiting companies the opportunity to demonstrate hardware and equipment, and to be seen on a high profile, international stage.

The high level conference on the sidelines of BIDECE has proven to be a powerful platform to hear key decision makers from the government, military and defence sectors, giving unprecedented opportunities to discuss innovations, solutions and areas of collaboration.

More than 200 exhibiting companies are expected to attend in the 2019 show and over 10,000 guests are expected to visit over the course of the three-day event. Off-Site activities are

planned across Bahrain, including shooting displays, military vehicle demonstrations, parachute demonstrations and warship displays. All will be available to attend via shuttle buses from the exhibition centre.

**Thomas Gaunt, Clarion
Defence & Security.**

IT'S THAT time of year again, when all of Bahrain's aspiring 'belles of the ball' get set to hit the catwalk in their quest to win the coveted Indian Club May Queen title.

The annual Indian Club May Queen event has had pride of place on the club's calendar for more than 30 years and seems to go from strength-to-strength as the years pass by – well known for both its beautiful contestants and its innovative and exciting stage set-ups.

The Indian Club May Queen 2019 event will take place on Thursday evening, May 2, and is open to all ladies aged 16 to 28 who are resident in Bahrain.

There is no restriction on nationality, the organisers welcome as diverse an entry list as possible – in past years, a wide variety of countries have been represented

including Bahrain, India, Sri Lanka, Netherlands, Russia, Philippines, France and Ethiopia.

A big crowd is expected to pack into The Indian Club's Gudaibiya premises for what should be a tremendous evening of 'full on' entertainment – in addition to the beauty and sophistication of the contestants, the audience of VIP guests, dignitaries, sponsors, media and spectators will be treated to a spectacular stage show, including a number of traditional and modern dance routines by talented local performers.

The format of the event will be similar to previous years with three rounds – casual-wear, ethnic or national costume, party-wear – for the ladies to impress the judges and qualify for a final 'Question and Answer' round – the categories being judged will include The Indian Club May Queen 2019, 1st Runner-Up, 2nd Runner-Up, Best Smile, Best Hairdo, Best Walk and Audience Choice.

The event will be choreographed by Farah Siraj.

For entry forms or further information on The Indian



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



ALL the stops were pulled out to make sure the Dean of St Christopher's Cathedral, the Very Reverend Chris Butt, marked his farewell party in style ... even the transportation! A special Bahrain red bus pulled up outside his home in Manama to take him and guests to the BAPCO Club venue in Awali.

Chris and his wife, Tricia, return to the UK after a decade in the kingdom, as reported in *GulfWeekly*, following Easter service on Sunday, April 21.

Club May Queen 2019, please contact me on 33331308, the president Stalin Joseph on 39526723, the entertainment secretary Gopi Nambiar on 39912039

or the chief coordinator Anup Mathews on 39690198.

**Job M.J.,
For and on behalf of The
Indian Club.
General Secretary**

FROM the fifth grade until I graduated high school, I was required to attend school six days a week. I eventually became accustomed to it, and now every time I hear a peer at college groan about having to sit an exam on a Saturday I remain unfazed ... a working-day Saturday is nothing new to me.

Since joining university, the promise of a two-day weekend has once again been returned, but what if it

Youth Talk

By
Sarah Belal



were a three-day weekend?

I bet most students and workers would readily welcome such a move, simply for the inherent increased chances for rest, but apparently there are several other plus points to such an undertaking.

The most significant of them all would be a reduction in an institution's environmental footprint. Fewer working days would mean less electricity, heat, water, etc. spent, not to mention less motor emissions from commuting to work or your place of study ... imagine the scale of reduction in carbon emissions if more companies introduced such a change.

Also, a three-day weekend

has been found to contribute positively to people's health. Overwork is associated with increased incidences of contracting heart disease, Type 2 diabetes as well as depression and anxiety and a shortened work week is bound to lessen stress in both workers and students alike.

Finally, fewer work days have been shown to increase not just productivity, but a Utah State company

saved \$1.8 million in energy costs after implementing a temporary four day 20 hour work week, so concerns regarding financial or productivity losses of any kind need not be heeded.

For a student, a three-day weekend would mean not only more opportunities for review, but also more leisure and extra shut-eye.

I clearly remember those unfortunate weekends in school where instead of

kicking back and taking some time off for myself, I would have to use my precious one day off of the week to catch up on revision if I wanted to stay on top of my studies.

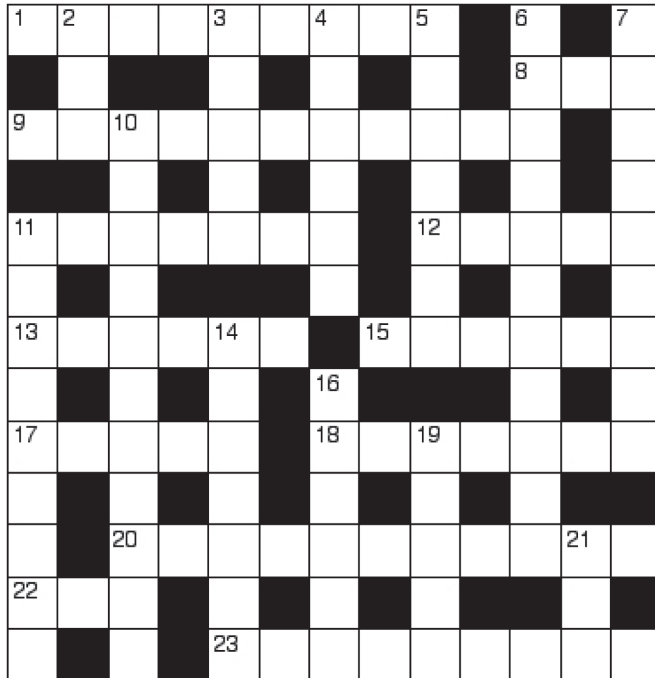
A three-day weekend would mean that those hard-pressed at work or school can have more time off to spend with loved ones or to pursue sidelined interests. This will surely result in a more balanced life and greater happiness.

cerebrally crust & crema



17214155 @crustandcrema crustandcremah

crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Faint-heartedness (9)
8. Possess (3)
9. Curse (11)
11. Colour (7)
12. Cavalry unit (5)
13. Apprehend (6)
15. Oppose (6)
17. Daub (5)
18. Rapture (7)
20. Expressed (11)
22. Garland (3)
23. Yearning (9)

DOWN

2. Eggs (3)
3. Crest (5)
4. Urge (6)
5. Letter (7)
6. Accompanying (11)
7. Hatred (9)
10. Conjuring (11)
11. Believable (9)
14. Elongate (7)
16. Signal-fire (6)
19. Ointment (5)
21. Epoch (3)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... designed the church St Anne's, Limehouse in London?
WHAT ... is the maximum number of games played in the baseball World Series?
WHERE ... in England is the town of Wisbech?
WHEN ... was the last professional fight of the former world heavyweight boxing champion Jack Dempsey?
WHO ... formulated the uncertainty principal and won the 1932 Nobel Prize in Physics?
WHAT ... sea does the North Korean port of Wonsan lie on?
WHERE ... did the explorer W. J. Wills die in 1861?
WHEN ... did Baron De La Warr become the first governor of Virginia?

just so

comfort
close comfort
close comfort
comfort

zero



EVIL

things #1

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 7 Cereal; 8 Ardour; 10 Include; 11 Vaunt; 12 Vast; 13 Scorn; 17 Hurry; 18 Else; 22 Loose; 23 Abridge; 24 Fasten; 25 Aspect.

Down: 1 Achieve 2 Process; 3 Vague; 4 Bravery; 5 Rogue; 6 Trite; 9 Mercurial; 14 Quieten; 15 Gladden; 16 Beneath; 19 Cleft; 20 Horse; 21 Brush.

JUST SO: Flat broke, The inner circle, Round the clock, Under a cloud.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Frederick Marryat; Five dollars; Switzerland; 1958; Kurt Vonnegut; It has more than one neck; Western Australia.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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

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Motoring Weekly

Steering you to the best deals on wheels

Truck drives huge demand

AFTER proving to be an overwhelming success upon its debut in Bahrain last year, Al Haddad Motors has brought the Mercedes-Benz Mobile Service Truck back to the kingdom.

The vehicle was at Seef Mall last week and is currently at the Marina, Amwaj Islands, until Saturday. It will be in action from noon until 9pm on weekdays and from 10am to 9pm on weekends.

The truck has the capability of carrying out diagnostic observations such as functional and visual checks, as well as providing customers with a detailed report of the vehicle's condition.

During its stint at Seef Mall alone, it saw to more than 210 cars and many more owners have already booked in to have work carried out on their vehicles with the marque's technicians.

Imran Ali, the marketing manager of Al Haddad Motors, the German brand's exclusive dealer in Bahrain, said: "We've had an amazing response, beyond anything we could have expected. We had people lining up who couldn't wait to have their beloved cars seen to, not just from Bahrain but Saudi



MOTORING
By KRISTIAN HARRISON
kristian@gulfweekly.com

Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait too.

"We're even more excited about our stop in Amwaj Islands this week. It's a bigger venue serving a different community, and we'll have an area for kids to play and watch films on a big screen.

"A majority of the visitors have already booked into our service centre to have maintenance work carried out after problems were discovered."

As well as the giant truck itself with its team of technicians running both manual and digital diagnostics, it was also accompanied by other facilities such as lounge tents, a waiting area and a car display and games such as a reaction speed test unit.



TECHNICAL TALENT: The travelling Mercedes Truck team check out an engine



ON SHOW: The new Jaguar I-PACE

Electric dreams soon a reality

THE Jaguar I-PACE, dubbed the 'world's smartest' five-seater sports SUV, was officially launched in the kingdom with a glitzy event at the marque's showroom in Sitra.

It recently received the title of the European Car of the Year 2019 and its sophisticated, all-electric powertrain provides high performance with zero emissions.

Stephen Lay, the GM of Euro Motors Jaguar Land Rover, said: "The I-PACE is the future. The revolutionary design combined with the innovative and compact electric motors incredibly transforms the driving experience.

"You can charge the SUV by battery which is literary a plug in the floor. There is also a fast charger that charges 80 per cent of the battery in

just one hour, which is amazing.

"We are currently looking for a company to install fast chargers at people's homes and we will also have fast charging points outside our showroom. A full charge will last around 350km, which is easily two days with average usage.

"It will cost around BD2 to charge, which is much cheaper than petrol."

The I-Pace is propelled by two permanent magnet synchronous electric motors. Similar to the technology found in the I Type Formula E racing car, these motors generate 400PS and 696Nm of torque.

The car has five seats and plenty of load space. The electric SUV, which has a starting price of BD20,000, is expected to be sold in Bahrain from September.

Insuring safe racing career

From Page 24

With the FIM's official backing, it means the BMR 600 will be recognised as a national race series and allows international riders with FIM licenses to compete with full insurance.

"Previously, riders were interested in racing with us but chose not to because if they suffered an injury or had a bad accident, they had no medical cover and it could cost them their career. Furthermore, it also means that our local riders can then apply for FIM licenses, which will benefit them and they can then go and race worldwide."

April 26 will see the conclusion of the sixth season of the BMR 600, with Saudi Arabian Motor Federation (SAMF) president HRH Prince Khalid bin Sultan Al Faisal Al Saud presenting the championship trophies.

The first championship began in November 2013, and in May 2014 the first champion, Hussain Al Koheji, took the crown.



RACE ACES: Pusceddu and Picciuto could soon be in action at the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir



The Superstock bikes used in the championship are defined as any bikes purchased from a showroom, with the only condition being that they must be limited to 600cc and fitted with race fairings. Being stock bikes ensures that they remain reasonably priced with no excess costs for engines and other systems.

Bahrain and the BMR 600 holds significant appeal for riders across the world, with

its winter season falling between the end and the beginning of the other world series.

Beddall explained: "The BMR 600 will give riders an opportunity to keep riding in their traditional winter break in good conditions with minimal risk of rain and thoroughly decent weather."

"All motorcyclists love to do anything that keeps them on a bike, and they need to keep racing to stay at their top

level. It works perfectly for them to come here and ride in a competitive series with a full team of scrutineers, marshals and other officials who have an impeccable safety record."

In fact, such is the demand to race in Bahrain that Beddall has been approached by numerous riders and teams from Europe who wish to race in Bahrain for experience.

Two such riders are Riccardo Picciuto, 20, and Emanuele Pusceddu, 23,

who both compete in the European Superstock 1000 and have won Italian national championships.

Beddall said: "These two riders are fantastic talents and would really thrive in a racing series in Bahrain. However, they need support from the local community and sponsorship to succeed, so we would love local companies to get involved."

"Now that we are under the banner of the FIM,

Bahrain is only going to grow exponentially as a force in the motorcycling scene and will continue to attract the best riders from not just the Middle East, but now worldwide. It's a fantastic opportunity to get involved in something major.

● Any company or persons interested in supporting a race series or riders can email Beddall at john.beddall@gmail.com or BMR600racing@gmail.com

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Motor Sport

Bahrain International Circuit – the home of motorsport in the Middle East

Triumphant testing times


MOTORSPORT

By KRISTIAN HARRISON

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THE stars of Formula One's present and future impressed at the Bahrain International Circuit during the first in-season test of 2019.

The eye of the global sport's media was focused on Mick Schumacher, son of legendary seven-time champion Michael, who drove a Ferrari for the first time and set the second fastest time on the first day.

The 20-year-old completed 56 laps and was set to be fastest until pipped by Red Bull's Max Verstappen. On the second day, he drove for Alfa Romeo and achieved the sixth-fastest time.

Schumacher said he found Ferrari's 2019 car 'incredible because of the power it has but it is also smooth to drive'.

Like many drivers on their first experience of an F1 car, Schumacher said he had been wowed by its braking capabilities. "It seemed to me you could brake later and later and the car would have made the turn anyway," the German added.

A member of the Ferrari Driver Academy, who was often around the team with his father during his childhood, Schumacher said: "It felt like home in the garage from the first moment, with a lot of people that have known me since I was very young".

Schumacher's fastest time



RED HOT: Schumacher dons the Ferrari gear for the first time, below, left, in action at BIC and, right, Russell in the Mercedes

was 2.11 seconds slower than Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc's pole position lap at the grand prix on Saturday.

Schumacher was using tyres two grades softer than Leclerc had, but testing times are notoriously meaningless on their own as teams do not reveal the specifications in which they are running their cars – fuel loads, tyres

and engine modes make a significant difference to lap times.

Schumacher was 0.597secs behind Verstappen's fastest time, although the Dutchman was using tyres two grades harder.

Unusually, the first day of the test was disrupted by rain in the middle of the day, despite the track's desert

location.

Also in Bahrain, Fernando Alonso made a return to F1 just over four months after leaving the sport, driving the 2019 McLaren as part of a tyre test for supplier Pirelli.

McLaren had asked the two-time world champion, who is an adviser to the team, to drive the car and compare it to last year's

machine, to help them judge the progress they had made after a difficult 2018.

Alonso said: "It's a step forward in every aspect of the car. The car has more grip, the car is less draggy on the straights, the engine is a big step better as well. Overall, as a package, the car is on the right direction."

But the 37-year-old said

it had not changed his mind about leaving F1. He said he doubted he would ever return but the only thing that might tempt him back would be a title-winning car.

On the second day of testing, George Russell set the fastest lap. The 21-year-old British rookie showed his true potential following his early season struggles with the floundering Williams team.

Unsurprisingly, his time was set in the W10 car of the reigning constructors' world champions Mercedes, of whom Russell is part of the Young Driver's Programme, as opposed to the Williams.

Afterwards, he said:

"Timings don't mean a lot in testing; however, it's always a special experience to be on top of the timesheets.

We had a very productive day today, the team learned a lot of things to help them progress. Driving a different car than usual, I personally also learned a lot which I can take back to further improve my driving."

Schumacher shared his Ferrari moment in Bahrain on social media. Place your smartphone over the QR code to watch him in action.



Make McLaren great again

FORMULA One is preparing to mark an incredible milestone this weekend as it notches up its 1,000th race at the Chinese Grand Prix.

The sport has come a long way since the first event held at Silverstone, an English circuit in the historic English county of Northamptonshire just as famous at the time for cobblers as racing drivers.

It was 1950 and the F1 event attracted 33 drivers and 15 constructors for the launch of the drivers' world championship with the British Grand Prix.

The second-oldest constructor and the second most successful in terms of race wins, McLaren, has fallen on hard times in recent years but have shown signs of real progress this season.

This is partly indebted to the abilities of rookie Lando Norris, who secured a fine sixth place and thus eight points under the lights in Bahrain.

It may not sound like much for a team so decorated; a team who feel they should be challenging for victories.

2018 had promised much – with 40 points in the first five rounds – but it turned out to be a false dawn with a paltry 22 in the next 16. Much of that was down to Fernando Alonso extracting the absolute maximum from a car that was at the back of the midfield on raw pace.

So far this season there is clear evidence of a jump in performance. On raw pace alone they ranked fifth of the 10 teams in both the season opener in Australia and the second race in Bahrain. Over the course of last season they only managed this twice in 21 races and were ninth over the entire season by the same metric.

Norris qualified an excellent eighth in Melbourne, but their showing in Bahrain was even more impressive. Teammate Carlos Sainz was mere milliseconds (in fact just 0.062 seconds) away from the quickest Red Bull of Max Verstappen. Norris again made it into Q3, too, two-tenths behind his team-mate.

The young Briton's run to sixth in the kingdom confirmed that McLaren had the race pace to match their raw pace.

Red Bull had a few issues and certainly were not pulling up any palm trees in the desert. However, the fact that McLaren could genuinely challenge them in qualifying



HOT SEAT: Lando drives ahead with Trevor and, below, being interviewed by *GulfWeekly* and with one of the marque's prized sports cars



and the race is significant.

Norris's eventual sixth place came with a fightback and one that showed a talent beyond his years. Down five places to 14th by the end of the first lap, by lap 10 he was up into the points by moving past Sergio Perez and by lap 16 into ninth behind Nico Hulkenberg's Renault.

With Hulkenberg's retirement two laps from the end and subsequent safety

car until the chequered flag, it ensured a fantastic result for the teenager in only his second grand prix.

More important than the result and their first points of the season, though, is the pace they showed in doing so. To make sure this jump becomes a leap they cannot fall behind following in-season development as they did last year.

It is not something that

Norris expects. "We've tried to make the car a bit more simple this year," he said during an interview with *GulfWeekly* at a special McLaren Bahrain customer grand prix parade organised in partnership with Mumtalakat, for owners to showcase their vehicles. "It was getting complicated and there were so many things leading onto different bits, which wasn't confusing ... but it was just becoming complicated.

"In some ways, we took a couple of steps back to try and move forward, and we've given ourselves a

better platform to start off the season. There's still a lot of work to do to be consistently beating the midfield guys. But our race pace seems better than we anticipated and I'm excited for the year ahead."

As reported last week, McLaren Automotive CEO Mike Flewitt welcomed guests at the Mumtalakat offices and Norris led the 12-car parade which began at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay, stopping at the Arcapita Building and continuing to the Bahrain International Circuit and Gravity Village in Sakhir.

Trevor Fletcher, head of McLaren Bahrain, said the event was part of the company's aim to give customers 'the best supercar experiences' and Lando impressed everyone he met with his charm, good humour and racing knowledge.

If Norris can once again similarly impress on the track this coming weekend in China with the world's eye trained on the sport, there's no reason why he can't be allowed to be optimistic.

Motor sports fans across the kingdom will be cheering him on all the way to the finishing line.



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TOP OF THE LEAGUE FOR LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL SPORT

April 10 - 16, 2019



EXCLUSIVE

By KRISTIAN HARRISON
kristian@gulfweekly.com

BAHRAIN'S premier motorcycling series will soon make its entrance on the world stage as plans have been

agreed to join the official **Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM) calendar.**

The global governing body of motorcycle racing, the sister of automobile's racing's FIA, includes the world-renowned MotoGP

and World Superbike championships, and it will soon add the kingdom's Bahrain Motorcycle Racing 600 (better known as the BMR 600) to its list of sanctioned series.

Series promoter John Beddall, above, originally came up with the concept in 2011 and set

about creating a committee to jump-start the championship. This involved obtaining approvals from the Bahrain International Circuit, the Bahrain Motorsport Federation and even the International Olympic Committee, and now his ultimate goal is about to be realised.

He said: "From the beginning of next season, which starts on October 4, we'll finally be on the FIM calendar and I couldn't be more proud. We already started this process this season by adopting the official FIM scoring system to bring ourselves more in

line with them.

"Not only does this mean we gain more international exposure, but it means we'll be able to attract top talent from Europe and around the world to compete with the passionate riders we already have in Bahrain."

Turn to Page 21

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