

Building lives



COMMUNITY REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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A BD1.6 million youth care centre and club providing educational and recreational programmes is set to open this year to help teenagers and young adults diagnosed with autism grow in confidence and reach their full potential once their school years have finished.



Artist impression of the Centre



Students at Alia for Early Intervention

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an Esol Education school

The Alia Comprehensive Autism Learning Centre is being constructed by the Bahrain Society for Children with Behavioural and Communication Difficulties (BSCBCD).

“This centre aims to offer educational, recreational and healthcare facilities designed to meet the needs of young adults with special needs,” said Shaikh Rashid bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, the head of public relations department for the BSCBCD and Alia National School.

The Alia Early Intervention Centre is run as a charity. There are school fees but these are kept to the ‘absolute minimum’, aimed at making the centre available to all.

“Our mission is to improve the lives of all affected by autism – from the parent of a newly-diagnosed child who doesn’t know where to turn, to the sibling of an adult on the spectrum who now finds himself in the position of primary caregiver – the centre can help,” Shaikh Rashid added.

(ABA).

Supporters are currently project fundraising, trying to attract sponsorship and financial assistance from various bodies and organisations.

The A’ali-based project is aimed to be completed in around eight months. The move came to light after BSCBCD board members looked into the current need in Bahrain based on parental surveys and the large waiting list found for services such as the Alia for Early Intervention Centre.

“Through the intensity of our programme, and by working closely with families through collaboration and training, we shall prepare our learners to be as independent, self-sufficient and socially-adept as possible so they may be active, contributing members in their communities where they live, work and play,” explained Shaikh Rashid.

Each student will have a specifically-tailored programme to meet needs across all areas of skill

development and daily life.

Student progress will be monitored through ongoing and objective daily data collection and analysis.

Individualised programming begins with a comprehensive assessment of skills. From the assessment and parent input, individualised goals are identified and incorporated into the students Individualised education programme.

Areas of instruction include a strong emphasis on expressive and receptive language and communication, social skills, academics, self-sufficiency with self-care, home life, vocational preparation, independence, leisure skills and community participation.

The programme will also include an Adult Life Skills section offering services based on the principles of ABA to adults with autism and those with intellectual

disabilities, age from 18.

“This programme’s focus is to provide support and opportunities for individuals to be successful and live

meaningful lives through active participation in their homes, communities and vocational settings,” added Shaikh Rashid. “The Adult Life Skills Programme is approved to

accept funding through the Consolidated, Person/Family Directed Support and Community Living. We are working to offer residential facilities in the future as well.”

The Youth Welfare Facility project at the Alia Early Intervention Centre aims to build and operate a residential youth facility offering educational and care services to benefit adults who suffer from moderate growth delay, in order to support their skill development.

Email headofpr@childbehavior.org for details.



Shaikh Rashid



The progress of construction

It will focus on maximising the potential of individuals with autism from preschool through adulthood by providing them with intensive and comprehensive state-of-the-art education and behavioural services based on the scientifically-validated procedures of Applied Behaviour Analysis

COLOURFUL CREATIONS
Art during Covid-19
SEE PAGE 2

SAVING STRAYS
One chip at a time
SEE PAGE 3

CRYPTO COLLECTIONS
Art with value
SEE PAGES 4-5

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Paintings to ponder



Amina with Cosmos



ART REPORT

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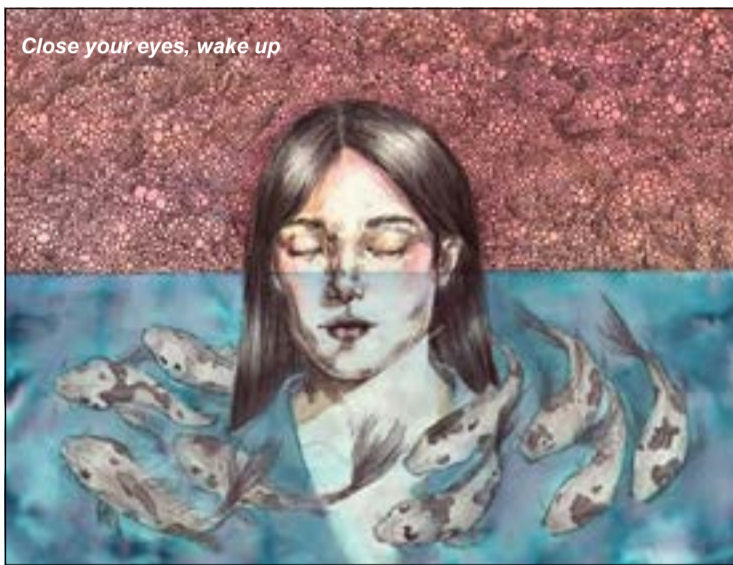
ARTIST Amina Aiubova has expressed her experiences during the pandemic in colourful form and her illustrations are now on show at the Al Aali Shopping Complex.

The 29-year-old Russian expatriate is featuring 30 to 40 pieces in the Import/Export Exhibition at the Last Oil Well gallery located on the first floor of the mall and curated by Frances Stafford.

“In the five years before the moment that Covid-19 shut down the world, I moved incessantly,” said the self-proclaimed nomad that travels between Russia and Bahrain.

“Rarely staying in one country for longer than three months, I took experiences from one place and brought them with me to the next. Cultures, religions and mannerisms ebbed and flowed around me. Some stayed with me longer than others. All permeate my art.

“Now, as the world begins to tentatively emerge from the pandemic I am taking stock of those works created in a pre-lockdown era that seems so long ago. Just as important to me as the art I created while I was able to move freely, is the empty space in my portfolio marking the period when I was stopped in my tracks.



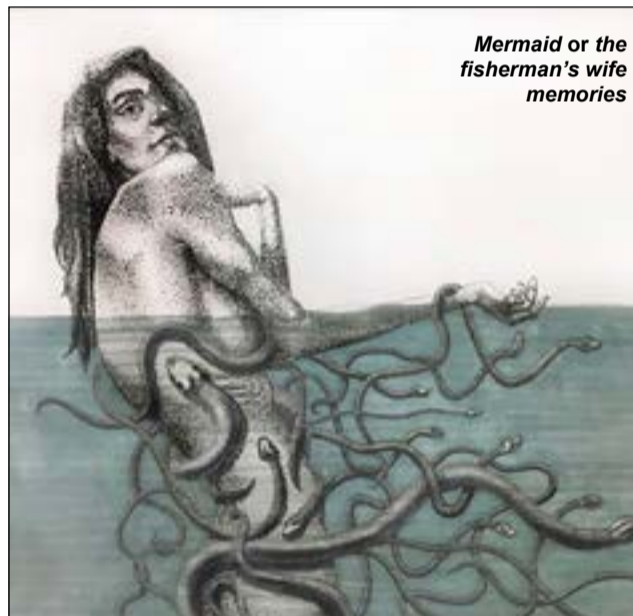
Close your eyes, wake up



Amina

“As the world turns hopefully to a future where goods, people and ideas can again flow freely across borders, I am pleased to share this work. This is my

first exhibition since the world shut down. “In Import/Export, almost everything exhibited is what I’ve created since 2017 and during the pandemic.”



Mermaid or the fisherman's wife memories

Amina, a proud member of the Aghul which is part of an ethnic group living primarily in Russia’s southern Dagestan, used an array of mediums to express herself

including watercolour, oil, paint and ink. One of her favourite pieces on display is called *Close your eyes, wake up* because it included more of

a meditative process than the creation itself.

Aside from being able to feature her intense and expressive art, it also gave her a chance to return to the art scene after witnessing the brutal attack of her Chihuahua named King, a year ago.

“My King died right in front of me,” said Amina. “He was attacked by stray dogs in Juffair and it was extremely traumatising. Since that day, I could not draw or create a single art-piece. Unfortunately the year was full of self-destruction and a long journey of healing for me.

“Only after returning to Bahrain, I was able to forgive myself and had energy to create and to share with other humans again. And I should thank Fran for helping me organise the exhibition at such a short notice.”

All her artworks are on sale and the exhibition is running until tomorrow.

Amina’s work has been displayed at numerous exhibitions in Bahrain and Russia and she also shows at pop-up markets.

She has been practising visual and performative arts since 2007, attended various art schools and colleges growing up, and graduated from Stroganov Moscow State University of Arts and Industry in 2016.

She is currently back in Moscow where she hopes to open an art studio and is aiming to start teaching in Bahrain and continuing to create her art.

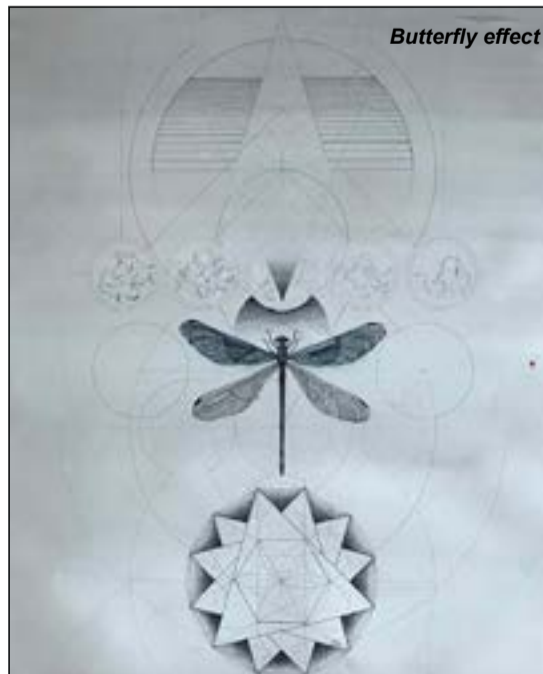
For details, follow @amino_acid_ on Instagram.



Giant steps



Karma coma



Butterfly effect



One of the leading medical establishments in the kingdom has been awarded the Diamond status yet again for its caring excellence, writes Mai Al Khatib-Camille.

The American Mission Hospital (AMH) in Manama, and its Saar and Amwaj Islands Medical Centres, have been awarded the highest level among accreditation statuses given by Bahrain's National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) for the second time, the first being in 2017.

After surveying AMH's policies and procedures, the NHRA stated that the hospital has attained more than 95 per cent of the required accreditation standards to qualify for this award.

Dr George Cheriyan, AMH's corporate CEO and Julia Tovey, the

Group CEO, congratulated their staff in a letter, saying: "Your tireless efforts on the frontline each day, to improve quality, patient safety and experience, have paid off. There is no finish line for Excellence in Quality."

"The last 12 months have been particularly difficult for all of us due to the effects of the pandemic. A resilient and high performing organisation will come through this successfully."

In 2007, AMH was also the first hospital in the kingdom to have achieved accreditation from ACHS International (ACHSI), Australia's leading health care accreditation agency, which is recognised by the International Society for Quality in Health Care, an accreditation which was also reaffirmed in 2010.

Chipping in for strays



Ace, Arrow and Amigo at their new home in the UK

STRAY dogs roaming Askar have been given a chance at a new life after being microchipped, with the goal of eventually getting them adopted by families overseas.

More than 50 dogs were microchipped in Askar by the Bahrain Animal Rescue Centre (BARC) and are now in line to enter the shelter when space opens up – and get adopted.

"We want to desperately help all dogs in Bahrain, not just the ones in the shelter, but unfortunately, the shelter only has a certain capacity," explained Sandi Thom, chairwoman of BARC.

"So by microchipping them, we are taking responsibility and giving them a chance at another life, while they are still on the street."

"It also gets them ready to be exported, because that's the first stage of the process. It allows us to track them, have a database of numbers and validate their existence."

COMMUNITY REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
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Each dog is then 'sponsored' by an individual to whom the microchip is registered. This individual would then help facilitate the adoption and finance the travel costs once the dog has been adopted.



Speedy

Bahrain has more strays than countries like the UK, the US and Canada due to the spaying-and-neutering initiatives in those countries.

As a result, pet lovers overseas who prefer to adopt rather than buy have turned to the kingdom to find 'fur-ever' homes for these dogs.

"Many of these dogs already have names, very unique personalities," Sandi said.

"If they were not approachable, we wouldn't be able to microchip them, so we know they're friendly and highly adoptable."

Last year, despite the Covid-19 travel restrictions, the organisation got 200

dogs adopted by families and owners in the US, the UK and Canada.

BARC has been working with the Wild Heart Foundation in the UK and Loved At Last Dog Rescue in Canada to facilitate the travel and adoption process.

Most recently, Ace, Amigo and Arrow, three puppies from a litter of five found in Askar, were adopted by a family in the UK.

Another stray, Speedy, had to have his leg amputated after being hit by a car. But he did not lose hope. He was recently adopted overseas and is now spending his days in the English countryside.

In Bahrain, the organisation has been trying to create a network of feeders and compassionate souls to take care of strays.

Bahrain Strays recently announced that Shaikha Noora bint Hamad Al Khalifa has decided to sponsor the Catch, Neuter, Release (CNR) programme for stray dogs.

Bahrain Strays will be focusing on neutering stray female dogs and has asked animal lovers to let the organisation know, via Instagram, if they come across any such canines across the country.

"Neutering female strays is, in our opinion, the best way to contain the population growth of strays so that they do not get pregnant, even if they move to a different part of Bahrain," explained Fathiya Al Bastaki, founder of the organisation.

To get involved with BARC, follow @bahrainanimalrescuecentre on Instagram. If you come

across any dogs that may be good candidates for the CNR programme, message @bahrainstrays on Instagram.

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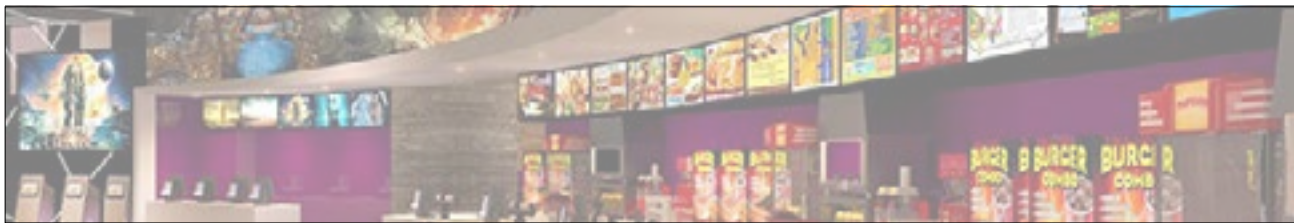
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One of the BARC volunteers with some of the stray dogs being microchipped



Culture

Coding cre

RAMADAN SCENE



THE Westin City Centre Bahrain welcomed select members of the media to an iftar at Salero Bahrain. Guests enjoyed traditional Arabic dishes with a Spanish twist such as Chef Juan Perez's ouzi-style lamb shank on a bed of paella. Present was Sheraton Bahrain Hotel, The Westin City Centre Bahrain and Le Meridien City Centre Bahrain cluster director of marketing Cristalyn Pastrana. From left, Cristalyn is with Chef Juan Perez, fifth from left, executive Chef Tyson Podolski, fourth from left, and other members of the team.



THE Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is hosting ghabgas by the Bay at its new venue by the beach pool. Musicians serenade diners with Arabesque tunes while they feast on traditional Arabic fare from an a la carte or set menu.



THE Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain is welcoming diners to its ghabgas at the alfresco venue, La Plage, boasting nightly entertainment and a family-style sharing menu. Diners can feast on traditional Arabian cuisine while the Triolet band plays on. The menu also includes modern fare from the Eastern Mediterranean, Asia, and Mexico regions including specialty rice dishes from different parts of the world like Dum Biryani from India, Paella from Spain, Tahig from Iran and Koshari from Egypt.



ART REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
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ARTISTS in Bahrain are turning to crypto-technology to add creativity and security to their pieces and make them more attractive to art investors.

Around the world, artists are integrating Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), in particular, to offer digital art connoisseurs unforgeable and unforgettable additions to their collections.

For the uninitiated, NFTs are unique computer-generated codes that are embedded into assets, like art pieces, enabling them to be traded and verified for authenticity.

Bahraini toymaker Abdulla BinHindi is one of the first creatives in Bahrain to embed NFTs into his popular toys, inspired by his childhood and the kingdom's culture.

"In the past few years, I have been following talented digital artists, some of whom like world renowned Beeple, have been adding NFTs to their art," the 27-year-old creator told *GulfWeekly*.

"As it started to become more prevalent, I also began exploring the technology."

In March this year, Mike Winkelmann, better known by his moniker 'Beeple' sold his art piece *Everyday: The First 5,000 Days* for an astounding \$69.3 million (BD26.1m).

With the embedded NFT token, the collector who purchased this piece can digitally sell it – letting the buyer verify its authenticity and see its ownership history.

The most popular blockchain technology for



Abdulla



Arno



The variants of the Karak Monster NFT

NFT art pieces is Ethereum, an open-source decentralised platform that is more widely used beyond its currency functionality than its celebrity cousin, Bitcoin.

Both Beeple and Abdulla have used Ethereum to generate NFTs for their creations. Abdulla has taken it one step further by generating unique NFTs for the physical Karak Monster toy, as well as its digital renderings he creates.

"I plan on rolling out more of my characters when I am done with all the Karak variants," he said.

"That way it offers collectors a chance to pick the varieties they like most in each character collection while not churning out too much in one go. Maintaining

consistency is my priority at the moment.

"I picked Ethereum because it was the most prevalent and developed choice in the NFT market and also due to its implementation in most marketplaces."

Abdulla has listed his work on Opensea, Foundation and Rarible, with his Karak Monster NFTs primarily sold on Rarible. So far he has sold seven pieces.

"Collectors see the value of investing in the artist and their work along with how they grow in the space," Abdulla explained.

"The advantage of this system is that it's always tracked and traceable. So the information cannot be lost as it may in the real world. Another advantage is having them embedded into the blockchain where there is more control over certain parameters in the smart





Weekly

Creativity



180cm x 90cm painting, made with acrylic, spray paint and air brush.

"I hide a QR code inside and to find it you need to check and analyse every millimetre of the painting, like treasure hunting."

"Adding cryptocurrency gives a real value to it, because once you buy this painting the artwork's value will be correlated to the Bitcoin investment market."

Currently, the price of Bitcoin stands at BD21,831.67, but what portion of a bitcoin Arno plans to integrate into his artwork remains unknown.

The painting itself is a parody of *The Creation of Adam* by Michaelangelo, which forms part of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling.

"On the original fresco the right hand symbolised the hand of God, but in my painting, I drew a robot hand almost touching a human hand fading into pixels against a Matrix-inspired background."

As more and more artists find creative ways to integrate cryptographic technologies, many may find it daunting to enter the field due to the potential high technology barrier. However, Abdulla says the hurdle can be easily overcome with information freely available online.

"It is a new avenue I encourage digital and physical artists to explore," he said.

"I see a lot of potential and talent in Bahrain and the Gulf, so it is just a matter of time until it gains popularity here. Right now, I am trying to get it more known and out there for local artists."

To learn more about Abdulla and Arnaud's artwork and invest in it, follow @abdulla.binhindi and @rn2on on Instagram.

contracts, such as royalties for artists.

"Coding or creating smart contracts is not something I am too informed on. However, the platforms used to sell allows artists to put in the parameters they would like before minting NFTs, such as royalties, editions, pricing, auction terms and general details of the project.

"It makes it easier for artists to get in and start putting up their work.

"However, the downside is that it needs constant upkeep.

"Due to its digital nature, all marketing and movement of work comes through networking via social media, either through Twitter or Clubhouse."

Meanwhile, Bahrain-based French street artist Arnaud Rothfuss has decided to go down a different path altogether by integrating cryptocurrencies into his artwork itself.

Cryptocurrencies, like Bitcoin and Ether, are seen as attractive investment vehicles and potential replacements for traditional fiat currencies like dollars and pounds.

"The concept of this painting, called CreARTcoin, is to speak about emerging technologies and interact with the audience because I hide real Bitcoin on the artwork," the 32-year-old artist explained.

"The buyer wins bitcoin money and gets an original



Samurai style

FASHION designer Ebtisam Mohammed Salman, who has wowed people in the past with her colourfully-collaborative abayas with artist Thajba Najeeb, has launched a new Ramadan collection inspired by Japanese culture.



The mother-of-two former Fashion TV reality star has transformed everyday, long black cloaks into warrior-wear with a samurai style.

"My new concept is inspired by samurai Japanese culture," explained Ebtisam, 35, who is the acting head of cash collecting and recording at the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications. "I am fond of samurai culture and I wanted to reflect that in my new line.

"The modernised abayas feature an array of cuts and colours with which these looks can definitely compete on the runways."

Samurai (or bushi) were the warriors of premodern Japan that were skilled in bows and arrows, spears and guns, but their main

FASHION REPORT
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weapon and symbol was the sword.

Their exterior appearances often feature sleek black ensembles with rugged and tough accents which are also echoed in Ebtisam's designs.

The Abayat Guin owner created 20 pieces varied between the classic black design featuring luxury silk and fancy embroidery and the street style boasting English linen with light and neon colours along with inserts of denim fabric in modern cuts.

Ebtisam also has a special team that is always searching for the latest revolutionary



technology in textiles.

She has just made a deal with a company in Tokyo to provide them with smart fabrics that have particles that can interact with heat and reverse it.

With Bahrain's extremely hot summer coming, this will be ideal. Women can look

edgy, sleek and cool all at the same time.

She and her team are also working on providing an anti-virus abaya that will be licensed by the Ministry of Commerce with a certificate.

Ebtisam has always loved fashion and design, creating her own clothes and abayas since 2011. She studied fashion and design in London College of Fashion and will be joining the Master of Innovation Management in Arabian Gulf University.

She became a familiar face on the small screen after participating in the popular TV reality show *Fashion Star Arabia* and was the first Bahraini woman to participate and lasted eight rounds of the 10-episode show. For details, follow @abayat_guin on Instagram.

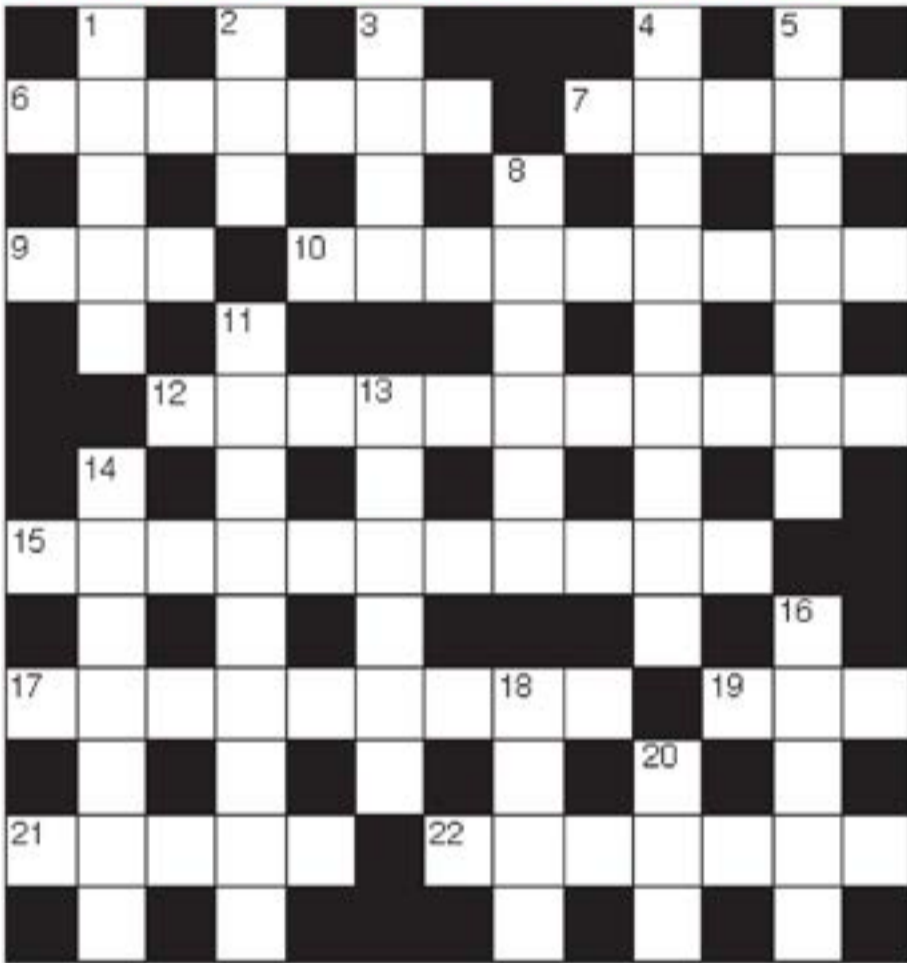




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cerebrally crust & crema

crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

- 6. Slanting (7)
- 7. Sweetener (5)
- 9. Argument (3)
- 10. Languid (9)
- 12. Unrestrained (11)
- 15. Focus (11)
- 17. Chastise (9)
- 19. Cunning (3)
- 21. Spate (5)
- 22. Greet (7)

DOWN

- 1. Detest (5)
- 2. Immerse (3)
- 3. Rotate (4)
- 4. Substitute (9)
- 5. Spectacle (7)
- 8. Note (6)
- 11. Carrying out (9)
- 13. Go back (6)
- 14. Amiable (7)
- 16. Cluster (5)
- 18. Fastened (4)
- 20. Frozen water (3)

who, what, where, when

- WHO ... is the UK Conservative MP for Chingford and Woodford Green?
- WHAT ... does a luthier do?
- WHERE ... was José Manuel Durão Barroso the Prime Minister from 2002-04?
- WHEN ... was the novel *Valley of the Dolls* by Jacqueline Susann first published?
- WHO ... wrote the novel *Whistle Down the Wind*?
- WHAT ... word in common usage derives from the Hindi word *bangla*?
- WHERE ... do Portsmouth FC play their home matches?
- WHEN ... did the mutineers of HMS *Bounty* settle on Pitcairn Island?

just so

gone gone gone gone end

sense sense sense sense sense sense ↓

1

HANS CHRISTIAN
ANDERSEN

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

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darn tough sudoku

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Sudoku

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Sudoku

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Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

- Across: 7 Vulnerability; 8 Clemency; 9 Cant; 10 Phillip; 12 Nudist; 14 Ignore; 16 Enfold; 18 Skit; 20 Intimate; 22 Revolutionary.

- Down: 1 Building; 2 Animal; 3 Iron; 4 Abeyance; 5 Placid; 6 Stun; 11 Previous; 13 Solitary; 15 Option; 17 Foment; 19 Keep; 21 Toil.

JUST SO: A soldier of fortune, Heaven on earth, High treason, An inside job

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

- Eric Sykes; 1858; India; January 1977; Anthony Hopkins; Blonde on Blonde; Venice; 1871.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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Motoring Weekly

The top motoring and motorsport news

Kicking into a new gear

One of Bahrain's top motorsport officials will now take on the reins as the deputy race director of the International Automobile Federation (FIA) World Endurance Championship (WEC) this year, writes Naman Arora.

Bahrain International Circuit's (BIC) chief operating officer Fayezy Ramzy Fayezy will work directly with the FIA championship race director.

In a statement, the BIC announced that Fayezy was in Belgium over the past weekend performing his role in the opening round of this year's WEC season at Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps.



Fayezy

Fayezy will attend all championship rounds and control practice, qualifying and the race itself.

"Fayezy's new role is a testament to Bahrain's rich motorsport culture and Bahraini expertise in the sport, as well as the trust the international motor racing community has in Bahraini talents," a BIC spokesperson said.

In addition to being on the Bahrain Motor Federation Board, Fayezy is also the Motorsports Marshals Club President, FIA Circuit Commission member since 2010 and FIA Gold Track Inspector. He has also been the Clerk of the Course for the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix since 2004.



WEC racing action

Familiar territory

F1 REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
naman@gulfweekly.com

MERCEDES, Red Bull, McLaren and Alpine walked away with double points in last weekend's Portuguese Grand Prix, with a familiar Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)-Max Verstappen (Red Bull)-Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) finish.

In a race filled with nail-biting overtakes, the talk of the town was, however, the track limits monitored by the FIA as 13 drivers had their lap times cancelled because they went off-track, mostly at Turn 4 of the Algarve International Circuit.

"Something about this track did not suit our car. I think, in general, this was a bit of an off weekend in terms of grip and overall pace," Verstappen told reporters during the post-race Press conference, after his fastest lap time was deleted because of track limits.

"It's a shame the fastest lap got taken away, stupid track limits, they should just put gravel back!

"We scored good points here, but I'm looking forward to Barcelona, a track that has more normal grip levels and where I have good memories. I think we will also see a clearer picture of how teams have

been progressing. It's a long season ahead, so a lot can happen."

Further down the ranks, Verstappen's team mate Sergio Perez took fourth and Bahrain-owned McLaren's Lando Norris took fifth, followed by Charles Leclerc (Ferrari), Esteban Ocon (Alpine), Fernando Alonso (Alpine), Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren) and Pierre Gasly (AlphaTauri).

Perez was also crowned the fan-favourite Driver of the Day, as he drove 46 laps on medium tyres, to fight hard to climb back up to P4, which is where he started on the grid.

In a season marked with early appearances of the safety car, Kimi

Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo) was the only one who didn't finish the race, after crashing early-on into his team mate Antonio Giovinazzi.

"Basically it was my mistake, I was checking something on the steering wheel, changing a switch that I got wrong coming out of the last corner, so I had to change it again and then I just drove into him, so clearly my mistake," Raikkonen confessed, after the race.

Meanwhile, two-time world champion Fernando Alonso finally lived up to his record, and drove brilliantly in the final stages of the race, scoring his first points of the season, with a P8 finish.

"It was a very good weekend in

general. The car has performed well, and we've made a big step forward, fighting with the likes of Ferrari and McLaren in the race, which is different to where we were in Bahrain and Imola," Alonso said.

"It was the first race weekend where I felt comfortable and could push the car hard.

"I think it could have been even better for us, had we started higher on the grid. Performance on Saturday will be the key for the next two races in Barcelona and Monaco, so I need to focus on maximising my one lap speed starting next weekend."

At the front of the grid, Lewis Hamilton fought for his first place

finish ahead of Verstappen and was able to get an eight-point lead on the Dutchman in the championship standings with a bonus point for the fastest lap.

Norris continues to sit at third in the driver standings, followed, in order, by Bottas, Leclerc, Perez, Ricciardo, Sainz, Ocon and Gasly.

But the 23-race season has just begun.

This week, Formula 1 also confirmed that sprint races will be part of the European race calendar, but hasn't confirmed yet which grands-prix will see the addition of the hour-long races.

The next Grand Prix takes place this weekend in Spain.



The two Mercedes in the lead



Hamilton and Verstappen after the race



Winners' Podium



Bottas being chased by Verstappen



Getting fit on the right track



Runners on the inner track



Brian, Debbie and Chrys

SPORT REPORT
By **NAMAN ARORA**
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FITNESS fanatics from across the kingdom have taken to the Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) on Thursday evenings during Ramadan to enjoy the fresh air while cycling or running on the world-famous race track.

The Fitness on Track programme comprises three weekly Ramadan special events and is ideal for cyclists looking for a safe environment and runners in search of a challenging and eminent setting.

In its first iteration, more than 100 people cycled, ran and walked at the BIC, while the second event drew 220 individuals.

"We have been coming to the Formula 1 race in Bahrain for four years now, and to be able to ride on the same track is incredible," said Peter Naylor, 60, who was at the track with his daughter Katie.

"There are parts of the track we haven't seen up close until this programme started because they are not visible from the grand stand and the TVs only show them occasionally."

The Batelco Ramadan Special events kicked off on April 22, followed by one last weekend and will conclude with the final iteration tomorrow evening from 5.30pm to 8.30pm.

As they cycle, run and walk around the track, Formula 1 fans can also get up close with some of the famous corners at the "Home of Motorsport in the Middle East," including the infamous Turn 4 where Red Bull driver Max Verstappen overtook world



Cyclists on the outer track

champion Lewis Hamilton but then let him pull ahead after going beyond track limits.

After sunset, there are food and beverage trucks offering healthy snacks for fitness enthusiasts looking for a pick-me-up.

Runners and walkers are relegated to the 2.554km Inner Track, while cyclists ride along the 3.543km Outer Track, which was the site of the Rolex Sakhir 2020 Grand Prix in December last year. There is also a dedicated area for children's cycling.

"What caught me by surprise on the cycling track were the hills, which gave us a good challenge," Katie added.

The Ramadan programme comes on the heels of a test event held earlier this year for cyclists, who showed significant interest as roads have become increasingly dangerous for bike riders.

In November last year, British expat Allan Sword died while cycling with friends near Hamala after a car collided with his bicycle.

The 49-year-old Bank ABC's chief operating

officer's death sparked much debate and investigations to ascertain how Bahrain can make its roads safer, by introducing bicycle lanes.

In March, 19-year-old Mohammed Haneen died in a collision with a car on the Dry Dock Highway in Hidd.

While authorities investigate and roll out bicycle lanes, the BIC is offering a safe space for families and riders to enjoy cycling in the evening. In fact, according to a BIC

spokesperson, the circuit is looking into continuing the fitness event after Eid, possibly in the morning, to encourage people of all ages to exercise consistently.

"There are not many places to cycle safely in Bahrain and we have been sharing this news with all our friends," said Debbie Howard, 39, who was at the track with her husband, Brian, and their friend, Chrys Pantazis.

"I haven't exercised in the last year, so it's great to see

people here – some of whom we know previously – riding and enjoying the track."

"We'd love it if this became a regular event!" Brian added.

The event is open only to Covid-vaccinated and Covid-19 recovered adults, with entry for children under the age of 18 permitted

when accompanied by a qualifying adult.

Those interested in attending must pre-register and pay in advance at bahraingp.com. Cyclists pay BD2 per person, while those on foot pay BD1. Those under the age of 12 can take part for free if accompanied by a paying adult.



The outer track