

Gulf Weekly

The community newspaper at the heart of Bahrain

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The community newspaper at the heart of Bahrain



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Mind matters

BAHRAINI sisters Narjes and Basma Faramarz Kazerooni recently launched a mental health application that offers people guidance in finding experts in the field, understanding various disorders and removing the stigma surrounding psychological well-being.

The NFS app, pronounced 'nafs' which means 'the self' in Arabic, was conceptualised by Narjes, 23, while she was interning at a psychology clinic and helping at Basma's Applied Behavioural Analyst Centre, called Brilliant Achievements, that provides support for special needs children. "I noticed while working in these different fields that there was a gap in mental health awareness and it was difficult for people to find what they needed," explained the founder and CEO of the app who is

also a postgrad student who is completing her Master's in cognitive neuropsychology at the University of Kent.

"That's when I thought, why not create a platform that can provide services related to mental health all under one umbrella."

Basma, 38, who is an



COMMUNITY REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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applied behavioural analyst therapist, was also delighted by the initiative as she would feel helpless at the times she couldn't direct parents or people in finding the right therapist for them, or material to aid them during their struggles.

The mother-of-two said: "We've all struggled with mental health at some point, whether from depression, anxiety, anger, trauma or even a combination of difficulties."

"That's what life constantly throws at us. Narjes has personally struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety while I was a victim of bullying due to my psoriasis and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder."

"With NFS, we hope to start the path towards people feeling more comfortable with the idea of seeking mental health assistance. It should no longer be taboo when you want to seek out help."

The app was developed by the Fathom company and will act as a platform that provides several services such as locating and booking appointments with a range of therapists, psychiatrists,



Narjes and Basma

behavioural analysts, psychologists and music therapists.

It also features a blog wall that includes various articles on mental health, a 24/7 domestic abuse hotline and a store for people to purchase items including pre-approved psychology books, materials for special needs children and worksheets.

While the app in general is free of charge, therapy sessions and store purchases can be paid for.

The sisters also created characters called NFS monsters that represent different disorders and describes each condition.

For example, there is a bipolar monster named Basma, a depressed Maryam monster and a dyslexic Khaled.

Narjes added: "The goal is not to learn how to avoid or eliminate the issues, as that is impossible."

"We need to strengthen the foundation within ourselves

and to be so well-equipped in knowing how to face and deal with whatever mental health obstacles and life challenges we might face.

"We hope to help people learn how to become the best version of themselves which, in return, will result in a higher-functioning community."

"Like we always say, you can't help others if you can't do that first for yourself. Just like during an emergency plane landing - you first place the oxygen mask on yourself before assisting others!"

"NFS is here for the people of Bahrain and the rest of the Middle East. We hope that it will be a useful tool in building our community and for all of us to start taking better care of our 'NFS'."

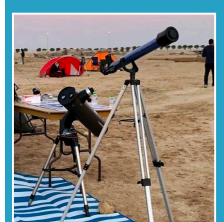
The app is available on *Android* and *Apple Stores* and there is a direct link from the nfsapp.online website.

For details, follow @nfs, app on Instagram or email support@nfsbh.com

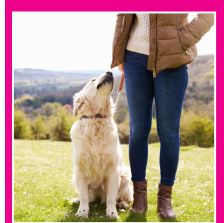
**For insights on the psychological benefits of pets, see page 3.*



Meeting with Fathom app developers



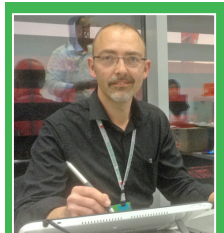
A SKY FULL OF STARS
Reducing pollution
SEE PAGE 2



POWER OF PETS
Helps with well-being
SEE PAGE 3



MUSIC VLOG
Supporting entertainers
SEE PAGE 4



SPEEDY SKETCHER
Motorsport cartoonist
SEE PAGES 4-5

Twinkle little star



Bahrain Stargazers

ANXIOUS stargazers hope to restore the night sky to its former glory by spreading awareness about the harmful effects of light pollution.

The inappropriate and excessive use of obtrusive artificial light washes out starlight, interferes with astronomical research, disrupts ecosystems, has adverse health effects and wastes energy, they say.

The Bahrain Stargazers, which is made up of 135 members aged between 12 and 45 from Bahrain, India, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, are focussed on shedding light on these negative effects.

"Our club created a 2021 'bucket list' for the public to help save the dark sky and spreading awareness is one of the most important ways to encourage the public to start making a change," explained Myriam AlQassab, the managing director of Bahrain Stargazers and the national outreach co-ordinator in Bahrain for the International Astronomical Union (IAU). "Light pollution is caused by artificial lights such as streetlights, property lights

ASTRONOMY REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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and factory lights that cause skyglow, glare, light trespass and clutter."

Skyglow is brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas and glare is excessive brightness that causes visual discomfort. Light trespass is light falling where it is not intended or needed and clutter is bright, confusing and excessive groupings of light sources.

"According to the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), light pollution harms our health, devastates wildlife, wastes energy and money," added the 32-year-old from Hamad Town.

"It also washes off the beauty of the stars and it can make us less safe.

"The IDA stated that over the last eight years, light emission in Bahrain has risen 50 per cent.

"We can make changes by shielding outdoor lights and pointing lights on the ground, using lights only when needed and changing outdoor lights to LED warm yellow temperature colour up to 3,000k."

LED can still cause harm if the wrong colour temperature



Camping out to see the stars

is used.

She added: "Some countries have changed their streetlights from high pressure sodium vapour lighting to LED, but unfortunately, they ended up harming the environment instead of saving it by using the wrong colour temperature. Anything above 3,000k emits blue lights and causes light pollution.

"Changes that we would

like to see are simply more dark skies in Bahrain and fewer lights.

"Stargazers and astrophotographers in Bahrain face difficulties to find good stargazing spots to enjoy the night sky.

"In Bahrain, the only place with Bortle 4 on the light pollution map is Hawar Island which we hope will always stay dark as an attraction for stargazers to

enjoy the dark sky."

The Bortle scale is a nine-level numeric scale that measures the night sky's brightness of a particular location and quantifies the astronomical observability of celestial objects and the interference caused by light pollution.

The group that has a passion for space, science and the stars aims to help grow a new generation of

astronomers.

It is registered as a non-profit organisation and has joined the IAU and the IDA.

Myriam added: "I would like to thank all our members for their efforts and passion for astronomy and for their time given in volunteering and spreading awareness."

For details on the club, visit <https://stargazersbh.wixsite.com/bsac>



Myriam



Myriam with children at the Bahrain Stargazers Astronomy Club



Myriam with astronomers of the future



Setting up

Noble deed

Students at the American School of Bahrain came together to collect funds for charity and donated almost BD500 to the Bahrain Cancer Society for the NGO's fundraising, social activities, research, awareness and cancer support campaigns. Right, the students with officials from the not-for-profit organisation.



Prescribing pets

THE power of pets are helping people cope with anxiety they have been suffering during the pandemic.

Experts and animal lovers around the world have found their furry friends not only provide unconditional love during difficult times, but also are an essential part of people's psychological toolkit, overall health and well-being.

"Animal assisted therapy has been a successful mode of treatment in psychology for quite some time," said Mariam Alammadi, a licensed psychologist and founder of The Child & Family Foundation Centre in Bahrain.

"Animals can provide someone with a sense of calm, provide them with comfort, help combat loneliness, aid them in forgetting physical pain and help them de-stress."

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, pets offer a variety of health benefits, including decreased blood pressure, lowered cholesterol levels, decreased levels of triglycerides which are a type of fat in your body, reduced feelings of loneliness, increased opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities and improved opportunities for social connection.

"Research also indicates that having a relationship with animals can help people, especially children, develop better self-esteem, better trust and improve their emotional regulation," she added.

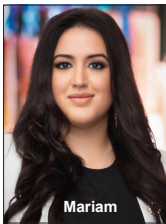
"During Covid-19 we were not able to touch other family and friends outside of our

home and this made us feel very isolated and we sought physical comfort.

"So, having a pet at this time really helped many people. Hugging or petting animals not only makes you feel happy and de-stressed, it can also help reduce depression, help you relax, ease tension and releases dopamine and serotonin - the feel-good hormones."

Mariam also said that

pets, such as dogs, provide discipline, routine, exercise and joy. Plus, the act of caring gives life purpose and meaning.



Mariam

Meanwhile, former Bahrain resident Dr Tejas Sameer, a British animal reiki master, teacher and gut health practitioner, who currently lives in Muscat, stated that recent scientific research



Sophia and Dr Tejas during an animal reiki session

demonstrates the health benefits of having animal companions from an early age.

"It helps improve the richness, diversity and resilience of the body's various microbiomes, thus leading to better overall immunity, allergy resistance and reducing the risk of autoimmune and metabolic



diseases in future," she explained.

"As adults, we find ourselves in a much better place due to lower levels of depression, cortisol and hypertension, thanks to animals. Then there are medical alert animals as well that are invaluable to their humans."

"Similar peer reviewed research demonstrates the mental and emotional benefits of having furry paws, winged, scaly, gilled friends with us. They help us lower overall symptoms of post-traumatic stress and lower levels of social isolation and give greater ability to participate in social activities - something that was so poignant throughout 2020!"

"I was blessed when my family-of-three suddenly expanded to a family of seven whilst in Bahrain."

"I adopted three Dilmun dogs and a cat that are now with my family in Muscat. As the whole world went completely topsy-turvy in 2020, it was immensely helpful to have them around, to keep us grounded in

the now and to sense the smallest, simplest joys available through their unconditional love."

Animal loving Muna Aldaaysi, who works in procurement, volunteers at the Bahrain Animal Rescue Centre, as well as offers foster care to dogs.

She said: "The level of emotional intelligence that animals possess, dogs in



Dr Tejas with a furry friend

particular, allows them to connect to humans on an intrinsic level.

"They understand and connect to human emotion and often times even display an appropriate reaction to their human's physical or emotional well-being."

"When you're upset or

unwell, your dog will know innately to lay by your side and comfort you. When you are happy, your dog will jump in excitement for you."

"During Covid-19, people were at home more often, isolated from the world and living an out of the norm lifestyle. Put simply, my dogs are there when no one else is."

"Some are my own and some are 'fosters' awaiting their forever homes. Our big furry family includes Courage, Marley, Teddy, Kenai, Tango, Cash and Cheeto."

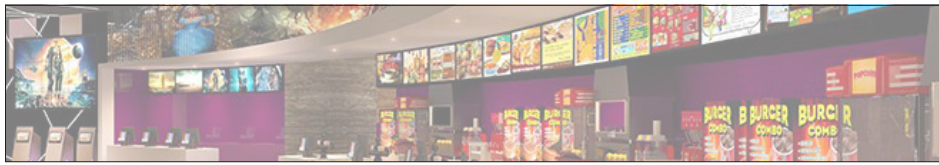
"I've had Courage the longest so she is my girl through thick and thin. Courage fills me with joy on the darkest days; her goofiness and clumsy nature are always the highlight of my day."

"Whenever I come home after a long day at work, I am met with wiggles and happy yaps. She acts as if she hasn't seen me in 10 years, when in fact it was only the morning that same day."

"She has shown me unconditional love, compassion and given me pure happiness. I couldn't ask for a more loyal companion."



Muna with Courage



Keeping the beat up

ALTHOUGH the recent pandemic has rocked the hospitality sector, affecting individuals in various fields, it hasn't stopped the likes of hotel marketing and communications specialist **Ryan Rene P Advincula** from making sweet music and inspiring a new generation of stars.

He hopes to give a helpful boost to entertainers stricken by the Covid-19 crackdown and introduce newcomers to an outside audience who have been using performances to lift their spirits.

Ryan, who has taken up marketing and public relation posts over the past few years at hotels such as The Diplomat Radisson Blu, The Intercontinental Regency Bahrain and the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa, is creating connections and bringing joy to people across the kingdom during these difficult times through his music vlog Viva La Rock.

"I created Viva La Rock to connect with talent, including hobbyists and sensational performers, as well as building a family of creative artists to showcase," said the former Sacred Heart School student who plays drums in the popular Tax Dodgers band.

"I have witnessed how music and art can play an important part of our

MUSIC REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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lives as it is a way of expressing our feelings as well as emotions. Everyone has got hidden talents - I say, don't be shy to express them!"

"My goal is to inspire everyone watching that you're never too old, too corporate or too busy to be a rock star!"

His YouTube channel already features five episodes in which one includes his daughter drumming her favourite tune and another is of a visit to a music shop in Bahrain that manufactures oud and strings in the kingdom.

His family's New Year Karaoke sing-along-relay of Gloria Gaynor's soulful classic *I Will Survive* captivated viewers and his other video was a gadget review that can help vloggers, podcasters and musicians with their sound output.

"I aim to upload memorable, informative, fun and energetic moments for the world to see," said the father-of-two.

"I have been playing the drums for almost 30 years and am still learning! I was fortunate to play with various groups around Bahrain involved in different genres."

"The Tax Dodgers played at different events before the pandemic



and as of now, we are just doing 'home quarantine jams'. However, during my musical journey, I have discovered and am still discovering amazing new talent around Bahrain."

Music has always been a part of his life, having been inspired by his mother, Soliman, who moved to Bahrain in the 1980s and taught at the Bahrain Music Institute, one of the first music schools on the island.

"Music was the backbone of where it all started for me and my family here in Bahrain," he said. "If it wasn't for my mum's passion and love for music, I would not have the passion for music and be the man I am today."

"She loved music and contributed her talent to NGOs, especially to the church, where she was head of the choir until she passed away."

"Also, our accommodation was in the same building where the school was, hence I would always wake

up to the sound of music coming from the classes below, from people playing drums, violins or singing."

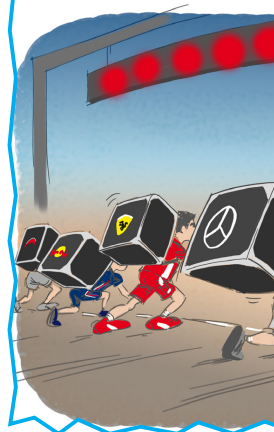
"That's where I got influenced. My mother would always take me to her classes and she also became my music teacher when she taught at the Sacred Heart School Bahrain."

"Music is an art and a God-given talent. We are all born with it, however, it is up to us to discover and pursue our musical abilities."

"I never thought that I would be a drummer, however, as much as I wanted to be a pianist like my mum, I never could get into those keys and when I discovered that I could tap, play the tambourines and get into the beat, that was the start of my musical adventure."

Those interested can email vivalarockme@gmail.com to be featured in the Viva La Rock YouTube channel.

**BACK TO BACK MALAYSIA
ARE NOW PACKING UP TO
KINGDOM C**



'Ca

ART REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
naman@gulfweekly.com

SPEEDY sketcher **Eric Patureau**, better known by his pseudonym **Cirebox**, is raring to go as the new Formula 1 season approaches.

Eric, who has been drawing cartoons for the Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) since 2014, will be capturing a fun angle on Bahrain's first F1 season-opener in more than a decade, set to take place from March 26-28.

"I started to collaborate with BIC in the beginning of the 2014 season, thanks to a former F1 public relations (PR) executive who was part of the BIC team," the 49-year-old Parisian told *GulfWeekly*.

"The deal was two cartoons every F1 GP, and live sketching during the main F1 and WEC events in Bahrain, where I stay at the circuit for 10 days."

"We also did side projects, including the map of the circuit for the spectators, a fun angle on Fernando Alonso swapping his McLaren F1 with Jimmy Johnson's NASCAR car at the BIC

Destination for family fun

The Art Hotel & Resort, an independently owned five-star hotel, has announced a rebrand; positioning it as 'a premier destination for family fun', writes **Avinash Saxena**.

Previously known as the Art Rotana Amwaj Islands, the property overlooks a 150m long private beach.

Commenting on the new introduction, Lilian Roger, general manager of the Art Hotel & Resort, said: "Our primary aim at the Art is to create the optimal environment for visitors to help them experience life's unscripted moments and develop genuine connections while enjoying the finest standards of hospitality and service at our establishment."

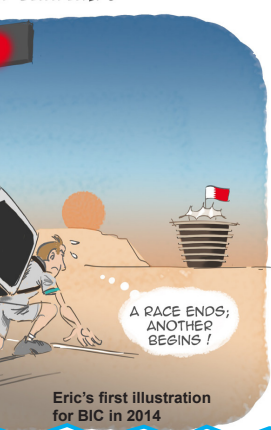
The property has 311 rooms, ranging in size from 40sqm to 374sqm.

The rebranded resort will retain its fine dining outlets including the Wu Asian restaurant, Rosso offering Italian cuisine, Cellar 59 offering beverages and tapas, and Choices, an all-day dining restaurant.



Weekly

- BAHRAIN, ALL THE TEAMS
MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE
OF BAHRAIN !



Eric's first illustration
for BIC in 2014



Eric's illustration when Williams driver George Russell was called up to drive in Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes seat, after the world champion was diagnosed with Covid-19

BIG SURPRISE FOR RENAULT F1 !

FLAVIO, THIS IS IT,
I'VE FINALLY
FOUND SECOND...

NO, THE SECOND
STEP OF THE
PODIUM !

WHAT DO YOU MEAN
SECOND? THE
SECOND GEAR?



Eric's first F1
cartoon for
Renault

Caricaturing the moment!



Eric with the
illustrative map
of the BIC that
he designed

and the F1 double-header in Bahrain, even if he missed the ambience of sketching at the circuit.

The BIC is the only circuit to put out a cartoon like Eric's every time, which in addition to giving fans a fun and unique angle on the race, has also fuelled the Frenchman's love for the kingdom.

"In 2018, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that my best friend from college had relocated to Manama!" Eric added. "We had lost touch over the years but the F1 race gave us the opportunity to reconnect, hang out and have lots of fun together again."

The artist, who left architecture to pursue his passion for cartooning, has been a professional for the last two decades and for the first seven years, could only dream of being able to combine his love for motorsport with his art.

In 2007, the dream and happenstance came knocking when Eric met French team Renault's PR people at the Spanish Grand Prix.

Eric's work impressed the team and this led to an ongoing partnership until 2013. What started with two cartoons at every race evolved into a full page cartoon and live sketching, followed by a comic book, titled *Memories Are Made of This*.

And with the BIC partnership, the artist has really had the opportunity to flex his cartooning muscles, aided by his Wacom Cintiq Pro, and Wacom Cintiq Pro tablets.

"There really is no replacement for being at the circuit, even if I do most of my work at the Media Centre!" Eric added.

"To be in the paddock at the beginning of the Formula One Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix gives me the chance to feel the atmosphere, to see all the teams' arrivals and preparation, to think of different cartoons we can do during all the week before the cars hit the track."

"This year, the BIC team sent me a daily feed of pictures of the paddock, but I did not have the real



atmosphere, smells and conversation with all the F1 people."

The artist takes 30 minutes to an hour for every sketch, sometimes sending a draft beforehand, in the event of a touchy event, like Romain Grosjean's crash during the first of Bahrain's double-header events.

Creating accurate depictions of F1 cars and incidents within such a tight deadline takes dedication and extreme attention to detail.

"I try to understand the spirit of the race - was it a boring race? An exciting race? Lots of overtakings? Crashes? Tricky weather?" the artist explained.

"The idea is more mature in the 10 last laps of the race. By now, I am used to draw the cars in any position. But before each race I look at a lot of pictures to see all the new aerodynamic parts on all

the cars, to be able to draw them.

"I have to pay close attention to details because there are a lot of hardcore fans in F1, who appreciate that!"

In the last year, Eric's artwork has been the highlight of some of the most popular posts made by BIC on social media. Of the 25 top ranked tweets by the circuit, 12 were Eric's cartoons.

The artist has also been creating digital drawings of iconic cars in history, including the DeLorean and the Ferrari 250 GTO.

With the Bahrain GP set to open the 2021 season, Eric is hoping to capture the moments from the circuit and immortalise them with his 'car-toons.'

To learn more about his art, follow @cirebox on Twitter or @iconic_car_toons_by_cirebox on Instagram.

and full page cartoons when Audi, Porsche and Toyota left the WEC's LMP1 category in 2016, 2017 and last year, respectively.

"It has been seven incredible seasons so far, of which I attended six F1 races, since the first sunset race in 2014 and the incredible duel between the two Mercedes,

and five WEC races.

"This gave me the opportunity to visit Bahrain 11 times. Unfortunately, because of the Covid-19 situation, I had to cancel my trips to Sakhr in 2020 due to the lockdown and curfew in France."

The caricature artist was delighted to watch the WEC

DELL | EMC²

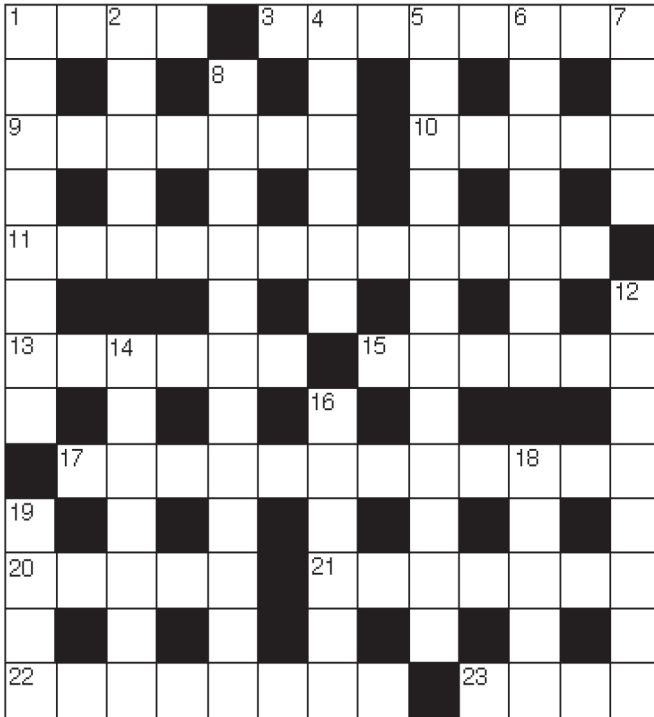
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cerebrally crust & crema

crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Team (4)
3. Wood fragment (8)
9. Income (7)
10. Alarm (5)
11. Conformist (12)
13. Use (6)
15. Impede (6)
17. In spite of (12)
20. Arrive at (5)
21. Cry out (7)
22. Salutation (8)
23. Caught (4)

DOWN

1. Afflicted (8)
2. Couch (5)
4. Considerable (6)
5. Wastefulness (12)
6. Mug (7)
7. Opulent (4)
8. In confidence (5,4,3)
12. Summised (8)
14. Bishop (7)
16. Scattered (6)
18. Dodge (5)
19. Pull (4)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... released the singles *War Canoe* and *Jake the Peg*?

WHAT ... 1995 studio album features the song *Fake Plastic Trees*?

WHERE ... was the 2005 Royal Ascot meeting held?

WHEN ... did the artist Georges Braque die?

WHO ... is the central character in John Osborne's play *The Entertainer*?

WHAT ... office-based sitcom starred Bernard Hepton as Mr. Fletcher?

WHERE ... in Europe are Temple Bar and St. Stephen's Green?

WHEN ... was the album *Abbey Road* by the Beatles released?

just so

aalllll

good0000

GIBRALTAR

pla friends ces

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

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 6 Benefit; 7 Buxom; 9 Cloak; 10 Fluency; 12 Pessimistic; 14 Picturesque; 18 Disrobe; 19 Crypt; 21 Poise; 22 Sublime.

Down: 1 Reply; 2 Regale; 3 Fix; 4 Duress; 5 Conceit; 8 Glimpse; 11 Ascribe; 13 Liaison; 15 Thrash; 16 Unruly; 17 Spume; 20 Hug.

JUST SO:

The thin end of the wedge, Odds and ends, An inside job, Fail to see the point.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Woody Guthrie; Houghton; Salzburg; 1995; John Banville; Razzle; Austria; 1906.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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

MotoringWeekly

The top motoring and motorsport news



BIC 2,000cc action



Bahrain 1 Racing

Speed spectacular

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

THE Bahrain International Circuit was buzzing with excitement over the weekend as racers from across the Gulf competed in two championships.

The speed spectacular started with the fourth round of the region's longest-running circuit racing championship, the BIC 2,000cc Challenge, which was dominated by drivers Raed Raffii and Raed Himmo.

In race one, Raffii (Honda S2000) took first with a total time of 15 minutes 47.098 seconds.

Ali Al Mansoori (Honda Civic) finished behind him with a 2.419-second gap while Majed Himmo was third 4.197s back.

Tareq Al Tajer (Ford Focus) took fourth and Raed Himmo (Honda Civic) settled for fifth on the final classification. Andreas Buelow (Honda Civic), Martyna Al Qassab (Acura DC5), Giovanni Salerno (Ford Focus), Ramzi Al Qassab (Acura DC5) and Andrew Ray (Honda Integra) rounded out the race results.

Raffii was also the winner in the Pro class, while Ali Mansoori was the top finisher amongst all Novice runners. Raffii had the race's best lap of 1:18.117.

In race two, Raed Himmo took first in 15:43.855, finishing 1.150s ahead of Al Tajer.

Raffii took third, 5.435s from Raed Himmo's winning pace.

Ali Mansoori classified fourth overall, Majed Himmo was fifth and Buelow sixth, while seventh through 10th, respectively, were Martyna Al Qassab, Salerno, Ray and Ramzi Al Qassab.

Raed Himmo and Ali Mansoori were the class



Drag racing

winners, while Al Tajer clocked the race two fastest lap of 1:17.847.

Raffii has extended his lead on the championship standings with 174 points. Al Tajer follows in second with 112 points and Martyna Al Qassab third in third with 108.

The BIC 2,000cc Challenge, run by BIC, the Bahrain Motor Federation and the Circuit Racing Club, will return for round five on February 5, and the sixth and penultimate meeting will be held on March 5. The championship-finale is slated for April 2.

After the BIC 2000cc, the spotlight turned to the quarter-mile strip with the opening of the 2021 Bahrain Drag Racing Championship. More than 90 entrants went head-to-head in 10 different competition categories for both cars and motorbikes.

Bahrain 1 Racing's Emirati driver Khalid Al Balooshi stole the show by taking the win in the Pro Mod class. It was the team's maiden competitive appearance of 2021 and first since they were crowned Pro Mod Series world champions in the US-based National Hot Rod Association, the world's most prestigious drag racing series.

Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa, BIC's chief executive, congratulated His

Majesty the King's Personal Representative, His Highness Shaikh Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and his drag racing team Bahrain 1 Racing, for their victory.

He added: "The Bahrain Drag Racing Championship is the premier drag racing series in the region with a top-class roster of participants every round, and Bahrain 1 Racing continue to show that they are amongst the very best in the world."

"We wish them and all those taking part this season the utmost success in another exciting and memorable campaign."

Al Balooshi clocked an elapsed time of 3.762 seconds in the Pro Mod final with a top speed of 321.58kph. He defeated Hani Ali who registered a time of 5.176s.

Ali made up for his runner-up finish with a win in the Index 8.5 category. There, he beat Majid Khalil Ebrahim in the last elimination battle.

Five other Bahraini competitors joined Al as winners in their respective classes. Zakrya Al Kuwari triumphed in the Outlaw 4 category with a run of 9.112s at 224.48kph in his final, beating Mahmood Mohammed who had an elapsed time of 11.013s.

Nawaf Al Mannai followed suit in the Outlaw 6 class, where he marked 4.683s at

259.05kph as the lone runner in the final elimination.

Hussain Mohammed clocked 4.461s at 276.67kph in the final of the Super Street V8 category, while Ali Yousif Jaffar emerged the winner in the Index 10.5 field after clocking 10.531s at 198.57kph to beat Ali Khamiri who had a 10.802s time in their decisive elimination run.

The list of Bahraini winners in round one was completed by Mohammed Al Taitoon in the Street Fight Bikes class. He ran 9.499s at 243.51kph in the final to beat Fadi Abu

Jamus's 9.446s.

Two other drivers from UAE and one from Saudi Arabia took the top podium step of their categories. Obaid Al Balooshi and Mohammed Rasheed were the Emiratis. Obaid Al Balooshi triumphed in the Competition 4.5 class with a 4.556s time at 244.32kph, beating Abdulrahman Bu Alwa's 4.575s. Rasheed won the Index 9.0 class with marks of 9.260s and 239.75kph, overcoming the 9.123s time of Yousif Al Zayani.

Saudi's Khalid Al Dosary took first place in the Index

8.5 Bike riders with a time of 8.737s at 237.19kph in his final elimination to defeat Mohammed Hasan, who had a run of 9.009s.

The 2021 Bahrain Drag Racing Championship returns next month with the second of the season's five rounds scheduled for February 9 to 12. Round three will then take place from February 23 to 27, followed by the penultimate meeting from March 9 to 12. That sets the stage for the season-finale from April 13 to 16.

For more information, visit bahraingp.com.



Racers celebrating



Al Haddad Motors has become the sole licensee partner for Avis in Bahrain. The transporting solutions provider currently has two branches in Muharraq and in Salmabad with more locations to come online shortly. The company offers car rentals, short-term leasing, long-term leasing, and outbound car rental and operates a diverse fleet. At an event marking the appointment are, front row from left, Avis Bahrain country manager Ruzbeh Engineer, general manager Gowtham Sarma, Al Haddad Group marketing manager Imran Ali and Avis Bahrain operations manager Peter Koshy.

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Rowing to success



SPORT REPORT

By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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DETERMINED Amal Salem Almalood, who has been spreading awareness about autism and her son, Khalid's, condition through sport, is now conquering the kingdom's seas alongside the Bahrain National Women's Rowing team.

The 40-year-old Interior Ministry civil servant recently participated in Bahrain's Modern Rowing Race, held at Bahrain Bay under the patronage of President of Bahrain Maritime Sports Association Shaikh Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, and swept two wins in two categories – the coastal competition and kayak race, which were both firsts on the island.

The race included female and male rowers.

"I'm so excited for these victories," said the 2020 Spartan Arabia band ambassador who competes in marathons and Spartan races. "I had won first place in the coastal women's category and another first place in the mixed coastal with Mohammed Qambar.

"I am truly proud of this achievement and my goal is to raise the name of the kingdom and, to hopefully, be a role model for Bahraini



A proud Almalood

women, showing them that nothing is impossible, no matter the difficulties."

Almalood is no stranger to victory as she had notched medals in the single and double categories last year but indoor – on a rowing machine.

"This year was my first time rowing in the sea and it's the first time in my life to ever participate in such a distinctive sport," she explained.

Coastal and offshore rowing is performed at sea and the boats are wider and

more robust than those used on rivers and lakes.

It combines fitness with exploration and shares similarities with mountain biking in the sense that it adds elements of adventure and unpredictability while maintaining precision and technique of Olympic level sculling.

Meanwhile, kayaking is a low-to-the-water, canoe-like boat in which the paddler sits facing forward, legs in front, using a double-bladed paddle to pull front-to-back on one side and then the



Almalood and Qambar in action



Bahrain National Women's Rowing team

other in rotation.

Before taking to the sea, Almalood trained indoors on a rowing machine and said that CrossFit had also helped her prepare.

"I do CrossFit an hour a day along with running," said Almalood. "It was my CrossFit coach Khalid who encouraged me to

participate in an indoor rowing competition and I was hooked.

"I have always enjoyed the rowing machine. I then met with Captain Isa AlGawi, the head of the Bahrain Rowing Committee, in February last year and joined the Bahrain National Women's team after that."

Aside from Almalood, the national squad also includes Sara Shabib, Noora Alshamlan, Khawla Aldosari, Ameerah Alalawi, Mariam Isa, Jenan Mahdi, Eman Shakeeb and Sahar Bastaki.

"I'm proud of these amazing women," said Almalood. "We are all one big family that helps and cares for one another.

"I'm also appreciative of Captain Isa and our coaches Ahmed Sabt, Emad Abdulla and Shiraz Khan.

"It took us ladies two months to learn how to row in the sea and we couldn't

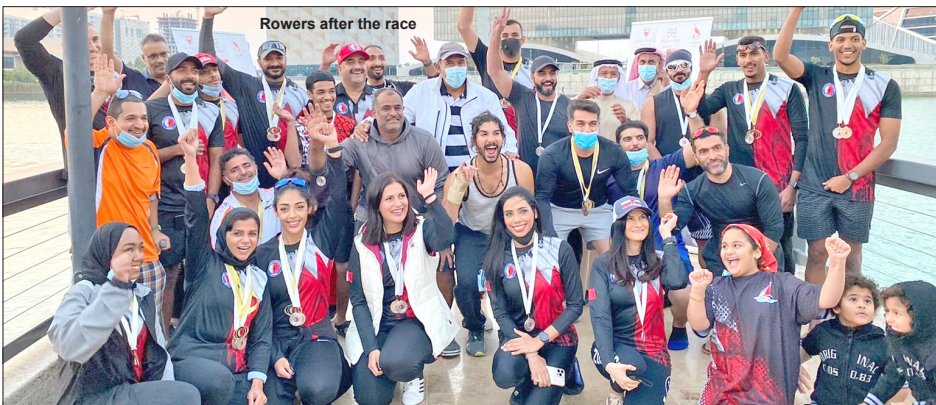
have done it without the supervision of our captain and coaches."

In the meantime, Almalood is dedicating this victory to her Khalid, 21, who was diagnosed with autism at the age of four.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder featuring a broad range of conditions characterised by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication.

She added: "As a mother of an autistic hero, I will continue to spread awareness about autism through sport. He is the one who encouraged me to reach these achievements and to serve Bahrain and the society."

For details on future competitions and the Bahrain National Women's Rowing team follow @amal19980hope and @bh.rowing on Instagram.



Rowers after the race