

Gulf Weekly

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Master 'peace'

MUSIC REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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BAHRAINI singer, songwriter Ala Ghawas has joined an array of performers from around the world in the acclaimed *One Human* music project aimed at spreading the universal message of peace and solidarity, while also raising funds for children in need.

The *One Human* orchestra features 123 artists from 110 countries, including Ala, who was contacted by the concept's creator Graham Czach to join the chorus of voices.

"Graham is an American musician and songwriter and he is the chief orchestrator of the project," said Ala, who is also a musician and producer.

"I was told that my music's good presence on *Apple Music* and *Spotify* as a Bahraini musician made them notice me. My ability to write and sing in English was an advantage too and that's how and why I got the call and I agreed to do it immediately!

"I was very proud to take part - in fact I'm also very humbled and very honoured.

"The project was sparked by the outbreak of the pandemic in the summer of 2020. What I personally felt from the other participating artists is that there was an urgent need for everyone to get to know one another and offer support."

The instruments used



Scan the QR Code to check out the video

While performing at Spring of Culture in 2018



in the video come from a myriad of cultures including Japanese Taiko drums, Indian sitar and santoor, West African djembe, Latin percussion, Scottish bagpipes, Arabic oud, European hurdy-gurdy and mandolin, as well as all the Western classical instruments including trumpet, trombone, strings and more.

Funds raised by the project's song and associated fundraising events will support Unicef, also known as the United Nations Children's Fund, a United Nations agency responsible for providing humanitarian

and developmental aid to children worldwide. The agency is among the most

widespread and recognisable social welfare organisations in the world, with a presence in 192 countries and territories.

"Unicef has supported and commissioned the project and they have applied for it to be part of Guinness World Records as the largest collaborative musical project ever made," added Ala. "I think it's an unbelievable piece and I'm so thankful that I got to be part of it."

The international initiative, that seeks to foster global unity through music, was conceptualised and composed by Graham who first brought the collaborative creation to reality on July 16 in honour of the UN Nelson Mandela International Day celebrations.

He was able to co-ordinate collaborations with 111 vocalists and artists from 110 countries and 17 instrumentalists and artists from 11 countries.

The sound and feeling

achieved with the building of the arrangement, instruments and voices throughout the song was 'truly magical', according to music critics.

"There was a clear passion and desire for dialogue with people whom we share life on planet Earth yet we differ from them in most of the details of life. This may be the most essential positive takeaway that we inherited from the coronavirus disaster," Ala added.

Ala, who has been active in the Bahraini music scene since 2007, has participated in several music festivals in the kingdom, Dubai, Kuwait and Cairo.

He has released eight albums so far in English and his ninth is scheduled to come out on November 24. It's called *Brouvat Mout* and it would be his first in Arabic. The first single from the album was released on July 30 entitled *I'll Praise You When You Die*.

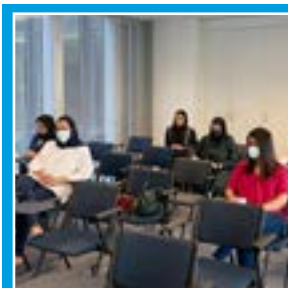
For details, follow @alaghawas on Instagram.



Ala singing with other musicians



PROMOTING POSITIVITY
Every body is beautiful
SEE PAGE 2



GROWING AN IDEA
Women in business
SEE PAGE 3



LIVING THE LOOP
New single taking off
SEE PAGE 4



CANDID CAPTURES
Streets of Home expo
SEE PAGES 4-5



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Bold and beautiful



COMMUNITY REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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A group of women from across the kingdom came together for an inspirational photo-opportunity to promote body positivity and showcase that all women are beautiful no matter the size.

Photographer Ayaa Al Jarhi approached Tru Active fitness attire founders and sisters Dana and Hala Zubari to showcase their inclusive collection and to empower women in picture form as part of their 'Tru Women' campaign.

"Be satisfied with who you are and how you look because you are unique and no one will ever be you – that's what makes you different," said Dana, a triathlete and three-time Ironman finisher who promotes living a healthier lifestyle.

"I'm tired of seeing models that don't reflect what an average woman looks like and I'm sick of people discussing a woman's weight rather than her accomplishments in life.

"Hala and I have a platform to change what is a social norm. That's basically what inspired our photo shoot. Love yourself at any size and at any age, whatever race you are, you are beautiful and you should feel confident no matter what is considered the beauty standard at the moment!"

The thigh gap was one of those standards women



Beauty in all its forms

worked on achieving over the years and some still do because it was considered by the beauty industry as a sign of attractiveness and fitness.

"I remember learning about calories so I'd always over exercise in hopes to get that thigh gap that all the young teenagers had that I didn't," explained Dana, a 38-year-old mum from Saar, who co-founded Cycling Bees with Sarah Al Sammak and Lettuce Run with triathlete star and Ironman finisher Mariam Turki.

"It's only later that I accepted my body shape and began to care about more important things in life than appearance. My advice is to look at yourself in the mirror and be kind."

Hala, Tru Active's co-founder and sportswear designer, was also delighted with the campaign that featured seven stylish females.

"We wanted to spread the message of loving yourself



The Tru Women campaign

and that you in your own body are powerful," said Hala, 29, from Saar. "The shoot felt empowering! All these women who live very different lives to one another were brought together by a pair of leggings.

"I can't say that I've struggled with body image as I would be in short shorts with thunder thighs and really couldn't care less. However, I feel we are constantly being told to look and be a certain way, and if you don't fit in this image then you are deemed unfit or unhealthy.

"Having a goal to get in shape is a personal choice and no one should feel pressured to have a 'summer body'!"

People tend to feel most anxious in the lead up to the sunny season because of the idea of achieving social media's 'summer body' – which to some means being super fit, tan and virtually flawless.

And, despite how far people have come in understanding body positivity, many still dread the season for that 'let's get summer ready' vibe instead of accepting their physiques and focusing on simply living a healthy lifestyle.

Yoga instructor Fatema Majdi, who was a part of the campaign, advises to chase

'self-love' instead of the 'summer body'.

"First of all, it brought me so much joy to be a part of a shoot that was iconic and necessary in our society," said Fatema, a 26-year-old part-time gym manager, who lives in Sanad. "All bodies deserve to be captured in active wear and we are all incredibly talented, empowered, strong and fit females.

"I have struggled with body image, especially when working in the fitness field – a field that doesn't neutralise or market my body type. It definitely added unwanted pressure but pushing through has inspired many and that is my support.

"I fell in love with yoga when I was living in India and that made me love my body and myself even more.

"What body positivity means to me is to love my body with its perfect imperfections and want to do what's good for it. Simply love your body unconditionally. And, remember, healthy looks different on each body and that is completely normal."

According to psychologist Mariam Alammadi, who is the founder of the Child and Family Foundation Centre

and general secretary of the Middle East Psychological Association, body confidence and self-esteem issues affect both the male and female population in Bahrain.

"Those that most frequently seek treatment at my clinic

about losing weight, changing different body parts and link food to feeling of guilt and shame.

"It eventually impairs their lives as they compare their bodies to others, get scared to try new activities because

they are worried how their body would look and spend time pointing out their imperfections. In the long term, this may lead to depression and eating disorders.

"The prominence of surgery and how accessible it is to people also affects our teenagers and young adults. They believe surgery is the best way to get a beautiful body.

"I have patients as young as 11 telling me what surgical procedures they would like to do when they are older.

"I truly believe we need to shift the focus from 'social media bodies' to 'strong healthy bodies', which is much more attainable, by

encouraging them to eat better and work out."

For details, follow @capturesbyayaa, @truactivebh, @bohemianfatema and @allthingsmariam on Instagram.

Hala and Dana



Fatema

are aged 11 to 20," she said. "Both genders can't escape the 'perfect body' that is portrayed constantly on social media; making them feel inferior and negatively affecting their self-esteem. "They can often obsess

All things Thai

The Thai Mart in Diyar Al Muharraq will be hosting a Night Bazaar this weekend, showcasing cuisine, organic products, spas, culture, crafts, tourism and arts from the Southeast Asian country, writes Naman Arora.

Running from today until Saturday, booths will be open from 3pm to 10pm and food stalls from 6pm to 10pm. Visitors can savour Thai delicacies and products while planning their visit to Thailand in the near future.

There will be a number of sales promotions as well as daily lucky draws for rewards, including a first prize of a free round-trip ticket to Phuket with three-night accommodation. The winner will be announced on the final day of the Night Bazaar.

More than 40 vendors are showcasing their products at the event.

Covid-19 guidelines and measures will be followed and participants will be able to visit all booths while observing social distancing and sanitisation protocols.

For more details, visit <https://thaimartbahrain.com/>



Nurturing start-ups



Taking notes

EDUCATION REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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THE US embassy in Bahrain and the Bahrain Entrepreneurship Organisation (BEO) have launched an educational programme for Bahraini women to learn the 'ins-and-outs' of starting a business.

The Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) programme, which started at the beginning of the month, is set to take the entrepreneur from the idea stage through a series of lessons to create a business plan to launch a company and grow.

Forty Bahraini women have enrolled in the 13-course US State Department-funded programme that is being facilitated by the BEO. The BEO was established in 2018 as a platform to recognise young and women entrepreneurs and to help them hone their skills, as well as help to network with like-minded individuals.

"We are honoured that we are conducting this



Women in the session



Zainab

programme in co-ordination with the US embassy and to have a role in supporting Bahraini start-ups to become successful entrepreneurs," said Feryal Nass, BEO chairwoman and founder.

"Bahrain is known for having the most active entrepreneurial ecosystem and considered the best entrepreneurial hub in the region with all the wise leadership and governmental initiatives to support this sector.

"There are many people



with start-ups at an early stage or have an idea and don't know how to begin. This programme assists with

this and the classes create a sense of support and also accountability."

The comprehensive

course includes speaking engagements from Bahraini business leaders with a series of sessions on topics such

as market research, basic accounting and marketing.

The programme will conclude with a vendor fair for the top three participants who will receive a small seed fund to support their entrepreneurial journey.

Participant Zainab Mohsen Salman, 28, from Al Daih, is delighted to be a part of the course. "I work in the crochet doll industry and I wanted to be part of this programme to gain leadership and financial skills, raise my country's economy and learn how to manage businesses and projects," she said. "This would help me develop my work further and show it to the world."



Culture

Staying in the loop

MUSIC REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
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A young Bahraini band has taken off on a musical mission with a newly-released first single to distil the drear and drudgery of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mission to the Moon, comprised of bassist Ayesha Tyabji, singer Nour Boujacli and guitarist Mohamed Abdulla, last week unveiled *Loop*, encapsulating some of their experiences and sentiments during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The two-and-a-half-minute ditty starts off with a distinctive bassline, layered with the lyrics: 'So we keep moving/And I know it's slow/ So I take my chances, when I am facing my foes/ And I am looking at my adversaries, right into their eye/ Kind of looks like me, that's scary/ I wonder why'.

"I was joking with a friend about how bored we were during quarantine and he said something along the lines of 'It's okay... we keep moving.' It inspired the whole song," 17-year-old Ayesha, a Bahraini of



Pakistani heritage who lives in Saar, told *GulfWeekly*.

"I wrote it in a single night based on the idea of moving on with life despite the repetitiveness and mundanity. When I wrote the song, I came up with the melody and bass line as well and then when I pitched the idea to Nour and Mohamed, they helped me tweak the lyrics here and there until we had the completed song."

The song was first teased at the end of March in a video shot in Ayesha's garden shed, which quickly became the 'birthplace of most of their ideas,' according to Nour.

"Since studios were shut for most of the pandemic,

home recording was our only reliable option," added 18-year-old Mohamed, a Bahraini who lives in Zinj.

"We are, by no means, experts at recording anything, so we stumbled while trying to figure it out and learn how to record a song, and we eventually showed up with a quaint demo, which we showed to our friends at Blazed Kite Records.

"They loved our song idea and helped us record and mix *Loop*."

Abdulla Mahmood of the Doyoureallylikeit? band and founder of Blazed Kite Records, along with his band mate Debbi, helped the trio record and mix the song,



Cover art

with Debbi programming the drum beats for the single. Ayesha designed the cover art, with help from her mother.

The three had decided to form a band at the beginning of this year. Ayesha and Mohamed knew each other through mutual friends and Ayesha reached out to Nour, whom she met after following the 17-year-old Bahraini of Lebanese heritage on *TikTok*.

The trio then met and came up with the name of the band, after getting fascinated by the themes and dreams of space travel, finally deciding on Mission to the Moon.

The three have vastly different music tastes, finding common ground in rock and indie music. Mohammed gravitated towards artists like John Mayer and Jimi Hendrix when learning to play the guitar and enjoys bands like Oasis and Arctic Monkeys. Mohamed is also part of 'The

Melancholics.'

Ayesha, on the other hand, listens to everything from rap to indie, particularly enjoying classic rock bands like Fleetwood Mac and Pink Floyd, as well as modern alternative acts like The Strokes and Radiohead. Ayesha has previously performed with Doyoureallylikeit? and made appearances at open mic nights across the kingdom.

Nour's idol is Harry Styles, though she also finds herself 'deeply moved by artists like Chet Baker, Joni Mitchell, Frank Ocean, and Fairouz,' amongst others. Nour was part of the French International School's rock band and has acted and sung in musicals.

The trio are coy about their future music, but are hopeful about being on stage soon since restrictions are being lifted, with Nour adding that "Bahrain is in for a treat!"

For more details, follow @missiontothemoonmusic on Instagram.



Streets of Home

A joint international exhibition showcasing street photography from Bahrain, Iraq and Turkey is being hosted virtually by one of the kingdom's leading photography groups, writes Naman Arora.

The Bahrain Photo Club (BPC), in collaboration with the Iraqi Society of Photography and the FSK-Photographic Art Society from Ankara, Turkey, launched the *Streets of Home* exhibition earlier this month, highlighting 43 photographs that capture the cultural, environmental and social features of Bahrain, Iraq and Turkey's streets.

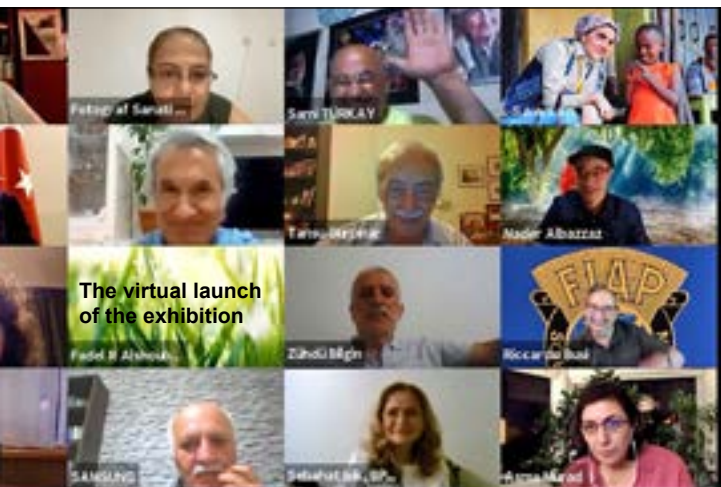
"The idea for this exhibition came about during the pandemic when BPC became the first in the region to come up with the idea for a programme called 'Visual Art has no boundaries' which the FSK-Photographic Art Society hosted in May last year, followed by the Iraqi Society of Photography in December last year," explained BPC president Shaikha Hanan bint Hassan Al Khalifa.

The exhibition was attended by a number of dignitaries including Turkish ambassador Esin Çakal, International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) president Riccardo Busi, Turkish



A screenshot from their teaser

Weekly



The virtual launch of the exhibition



Cafe on the Road by Sawsan Taher



Wisdom Sits Quietly by Tosin

Streets come alive



Time Out by Jamal



Aunt Fatma's Place by Turkish photographer Fedai Coşkun



Shaikha Hanan

Art Federation president Sefa Ulukan, Iraqi Society of Photography president Hadi Al-Najar and Ankara's Photographic Art Society president Sami Turkey.

Hadi noted that the exhibition came at an opportune moment when 'everyone misses a lot of street life, especially as they became empty and devoid of followers due to the pandemic'.

Photographs by 11 of Bahrain's top photographers are part of the exhibition,



Cooking by Hussain

depicting themes like social interaction, time, and ephemera through moments captured on the street.

Shaikha Hanan's photograph, titled *Formula 4*, and captured with a Canon 1D Mark II highlights Bahrain's love for four-wheeled sports in its alleyways as well as the relationship between a child and his elders.

Photographs of Bahrain's streets by Sawsan Taher,

Asma Murad, Hussain Fardan, Herz AlBanki, Jamal AlKhayyat, Tosin Arowojolu, Nader AlBazzaz, Mohammed AlHajer, Fadel Alshobaki and Sebahat Isik are also featured in the exhibition, which is available online now.

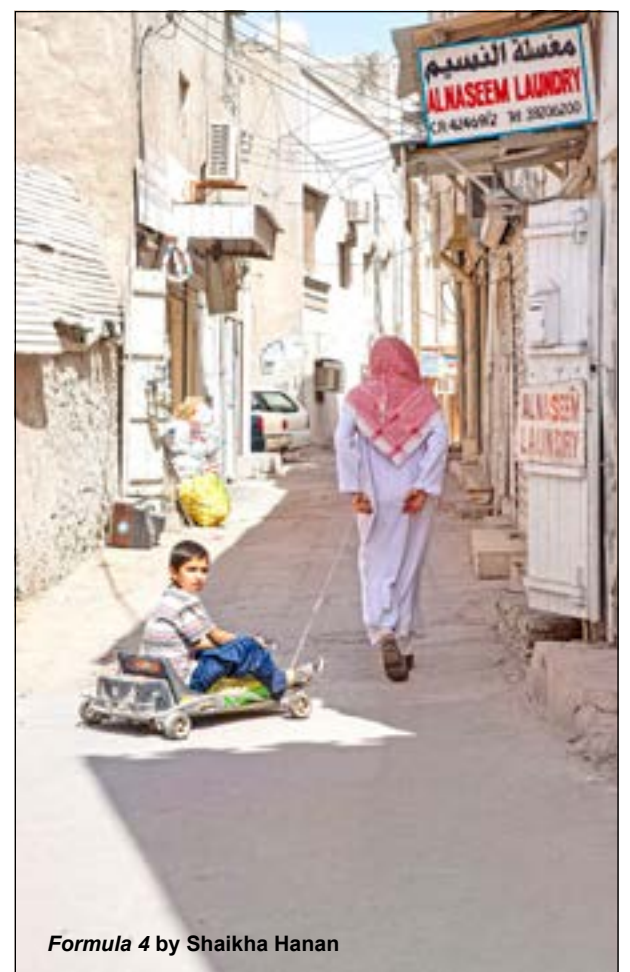
Captured with a Nikon D7000, Tosin's *Wisdom Sits Quietly* taken at Bab Al Bahrain, distills a traditional flavour of the kingdom, with the

photographer adding: "I took this gentleman's photograph because, to me, he represented wisdom and culture in the way he was sitting comfortably in his thobe with the bicycle behind him."

Hussain ventured out to the Malkiya village during Ashoora, with his Canon camera, and snapped, *Cooking*, a shot of a Bahraini woman cooking a meal using traditional method using palm leaves.

Sawsan's *Café on the Road* poses an implicit question to the viewer about how things have changed. "Men used to gather in cafe to drink tea and talk in person with friends," the photographer, who used a Nikon D750, added. "However, nowadays, the conversation is through mobile phones and friends in the café are often forgotten."

To check out the exhibition, visit <https://bahrainphotoclub.net/>



Formula 4 by Shaikha Hanan

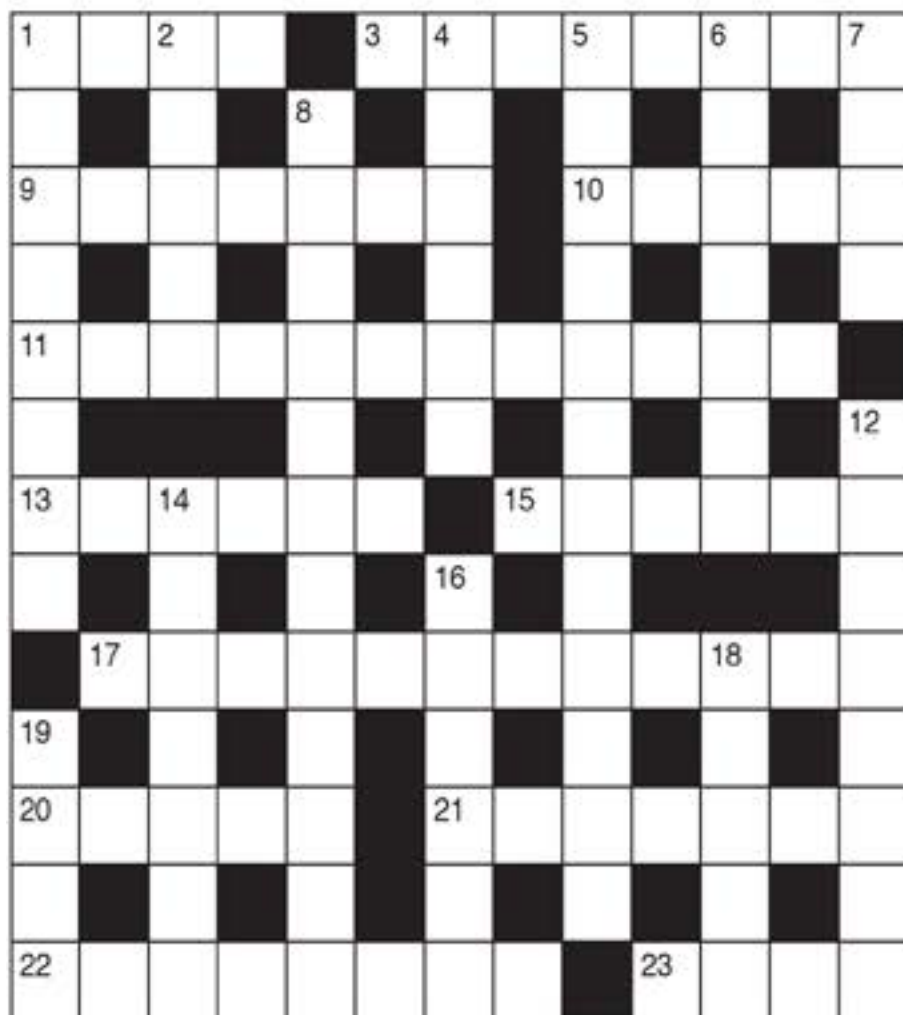
Time Out



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crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Adorn (4)
3. Falls back (8)
9. Monkey-wrench (7)
10. The present time (5)
11. Politely (12)
13. Befit (6)
15. Frustrate (6)
17. Shipments (12)
20. Jewish teacher (5)
21. A cloth (7)
22. Fatherly (8)
23. Tidy (4)

DOWN

1. Portray (8)
2. Stupid (5)
4. Mistakes (6)
5. Proclamation (12)
6. Vest (7)
7. Prophet (4)
8. Interval (12)
12. Old joke (8)
14. Jemmy (7)
16. Items of business (6)
18. Female relative (5)
19. Support (4)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... wrote the novel *Bill The Galactic Hero* in which spaceships stretch using Bloater Drive?
WHAT ... UK television and radio presenter released the single *Alcatraz* under the name Kirk Houston?
WHERE ... did the UK children's television character Mr Benn live?
WHEN ... did the author Rex Stout die?
WHO ... directed the 1953 film *The Big Heat*?
WHAT ... 1980s Broadway musical featured the songs *The Lambeth Walk* and *Leaning on a Lamppost*?
WHERE ... did the children's character *Paddington Bear* hail from?
WHEN ... was the Harold Pinter stage play *The New World Order* first produced?

just so

DOUBT

from

2

E CAB T

baskket

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

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 6 Release; 7 Halma; 9 Tepid; 10 Complex; 12 Retribution; 14 Consequence; 18 Allowed; 19 Annoy; 21 Tread; 22 Reverse.

Down: 1 Never; 2 Revise; 3 Use; 4 Carpet; 5 Emperor; 8 Cobbler; 11 Croquet; 13 Forlorn; 15 Slogan; 16 Cancel; 17 Hoist; 20 Wed.

JUST SO: A reversal of fortune, Fast forward, To be or not to be, Ground beef

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Alan Milburn; ZE Records; Between South Africa and Mozambique; 1980; Richard Morant; Genesis; 7, Eccles Street; 1960.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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

MotoringWeekly

The top motoring and motorsport news

A taste of success



RACE REPORT

By NAMAN ARORA
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LAST weekend's Formula E saw Mahindra Racing take its first victory in the championship in more than two years, as Alex Lynn stormed by the chequered flag in the 13th round of the season.

Lynn was the second to cross the finish line, behind Audi's Lucas di Grassi who ended up getting black-flagged and disqualified on the final lap after his team opted not to serve a drive-through penalty.

Behind Lynn was Mercedes EQ's Nyck De Vries in the second race, followed by Mitch Evans (Jaguar), Robin Frijns (Virgin) and Pascal Wehrleing (Porsche).

In the first race, Jake Dennis (BMW) took the win, followed by de Vries, Lynn, Andre Lotterer (Porsche),



Racing action



De Vries

and Rene Rast (Audi).

"This is my second podium of the weekend, but ultimately, I'm a little disappointed to have only finished runner-up today," said De Vries after the race.

"However, most of all, I feel sorry for my teammate Stoffel, who deserved the win in my opinion but was

taken out by Oliver Rowland. Still, there's nothing you can do in such cases. All in all, we were a bit unlucky with the safety car, as we had just activated Attack Mode when it came out on track.

"That made me vulnerable following the restart and then Lucas di Grassi was suddenly up front, fighting for the lead,

which really surprised me, because he shouldn't have been there. In the end, Alex Lynn and Mahindra Racing were deserving winners. I gave it my all, but unfortunately, it was impossible to get alongside him and launch

another attack."

Virgin now leads the team championships, followed by Mercedes, Jaguar, Techeetah, BMW i Andretti, Audi, Mahindra, Porsche, Rokita and Nissan.

De Vries continues to lead the drivers in points,

followed by Frijns, Sam Bird (Jaguar), Dennis and António Félix Da Costa (Techeetah).

Formula E will now head to Berlin for the final two races of the season, on August 14 and 15, where the 2020-21 Formula E champion will be crowned.

PINNACLE OF SPORT

Kristian Blummenfelt, on Monday, put his best foot forward in Tokyo's hot and humid conditions to become the Olympic champion and Norway's first gold medallist in triathlon, writes Lisa Pringle.

Going into the Games ranked world number 2 with wins in World Triathlon Championship Series Yokohama and World Cup Lisbon, top 10 finishes in World Cup Valencia and WTCS Leeds, and a 13th place finish at the Rio Olympics under his belt, Blummenfelt had the advantage of fitness as well as experience.

However, it was his capacity to suffer and push limits that would see him across the finish line first.

"It is a moment that I have been dreaming about for so many years," Blummenfelt said. "To be able to put it together on the day is something I am really proud of. It is a strange feeling coming into the last 100 metres and knowing that I had victory."

While Vincent Luis (FRA) took the honours of leading the 1.5km swim in Odaiba Bay onto the 40km bike leg, Blummenfelt was



Blummenfelt

less than 30 seconds back driving the chase pack to bridge the gap.

By halfway, the field had come together on the tight and technical course, and despite breakaway attempts it became clear the race would be decided on the 10km run.

Out of bike-to-run transition, Blummenfelt put himself in a good position in the midst of a lead pack of nine athletes including Luis and Tyler Mislawchuk (CAN). But as the pace (and ambient temperature) rose, one by one they dropped off until it was only Blummenfelt, Alex Yee (GBR) and Hayden Wilde

(NZL) in the medal hunt.

With one kilometre to go, Blummenfelt charged ahead – to which the other two had no answer. He lifted the tape in 1:45:04, and then collapsed across the finish line. He had given all and, as reward, achieved the pinnacle of sport.

Further back in the field, fellow athletes Luis, Mislawchuk, and Javier Gomez (ESP) finished 13th, 15th, and 25th respectively while Henri Schoeman (RSA) called in a DNF due to injury.

There will be more Olympic action to come on Saturday in the mixed relay.



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Relishing challenge



SPORT REPORT

By REEM AL DAAYSI
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HARD-HITTING Yousif Jamal is the first Bahraini to compete in the Egypt Arab International Squash Open which starts on Friday.

The 23-year-old fell in love with the sport as a schoolboy and will be among a 200-strong field of players from around the globe vying for the title.

"It is a huge honour to be the first Bahraini to take part in these championships and I've been training hard and, hopefully, I will come back to the kingdom having made my mark," he said.

For the uninitiated, squash is a racquet sport played by two or four players in a four-walled court with a small hollow rubber ball. Once the ball is served, players take turns hitting the ball against the front wall, above the tin and below the outline.

Squash is played by an estimated 20 million people worldwide and has been around for 190 years.

Jamal is preparing for the tournament at a training camp in Egypt. The event will be staged at the Palms Hills Courts in Cairo.

"I started playing when I was eight years old and fell in love with the sport," he said. "I have participated in several local and regional championships – including tournaments in India and Malaysia – and my aspirations include further developing the sport in Bahrain."

He has been preparing for the challenge with the help of a specialised fitness coach for three days a week while also putting in an additional three days at the JC Squash Centre with his coach, 45-year-old Hussain Al Thawadi.



Mr Jamal during training in Bahrain

Jamal's next international adventure will take him to the UK in August having qualified for the Professional Squash World Tour in Manchester.

Al Thawadi also revealed that a centre will be inaugurated in Bahrain next month to focus on specialised squash training and professional programmes for the growing number of Bahraini and expatriate enthusiasts.

"Squash as a sport arrived in Bahrain in the 1940s with British soldiers and it has developed over the years," he said. "When searching for an excellent squash player, the most important characteristics and abilities we look

for are speed, flexibility and agility, as well as quick reflexes and any beginner player can develop these skills through training."

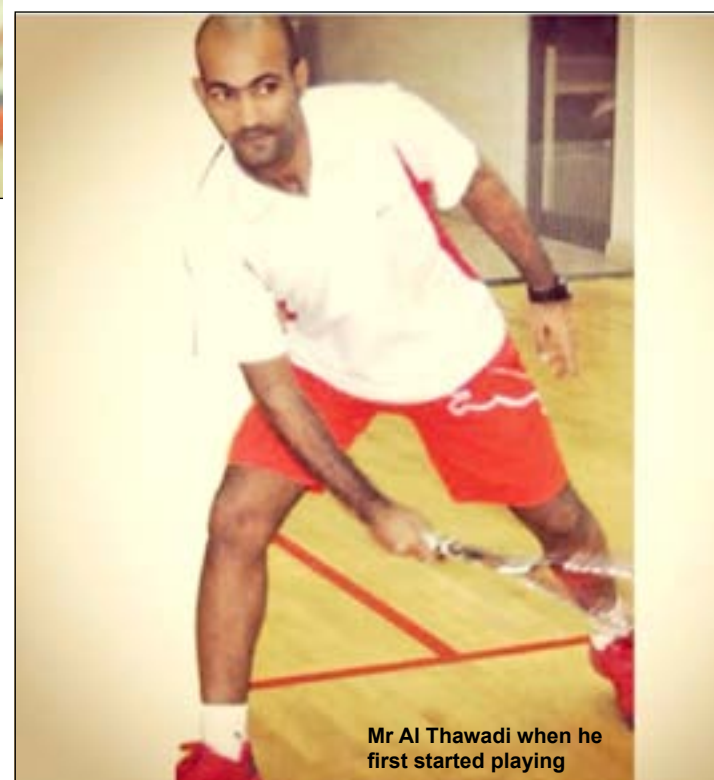
He stressed the importance of investing in the game and developing young players to represent Bahrain in international tournaments and championships.

"My ambition for the sport is to help create a generation of professional players representing Bahrain across the globe.

"Our emotions are indescribable and powerful as we represent Bahrain in this championship and, hopefully, we will bring home a few new accomplishments for the kingdom."



Mr Jamal



Mr Al Thawadi when he first started playing