

EMERGING: The band with their Musivv Award



Get in the groove

MUSIC REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
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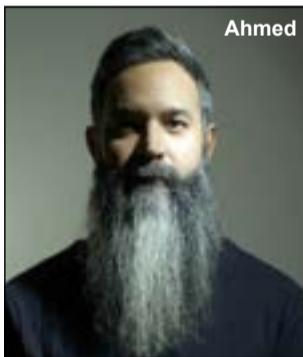
BAHRAINI alternative fusion band **Hotboxgroove** is gearing up to release its first extended-play (EP) album, comprised of reimaginings of its award-winning song **Midnight Blooms**.

The *Alchemists and Imaginaries* EP is set to

be released on May 10 and features three distinct artists' takes on the psychedelic group's first-ever single, originally released in October 2022.

Last year, the song earned the album two nominations and a win at the UAE-based Musivv Music Awards.

"We were delighted by the public response to *Midnight Blooms*, and when some of our musician friends found their vibe with the music, we



Ahmed

asked them to reimagine and remix it, with full creative freedom," Khalil Qureshi, one of the band leaders, told *GulfWeekly*.

The group, known for blending jazz, blues, funk and psychedelic elements to create its own unique vibe, also includes Ryan John on drums, Karl Roderick on rhythm and lead guitar, vocalist Joshua Pandit on synth, Szabi Nigo on trumpet, Rod Collins on saxophone and Ryan James on bass guitar.

On *Alchemists and Imaginaries*, three Bahraini artists - Ahmed Zainal, Fadal Nazir aka PapaPush and Arif Albolushi aka DJ Mysterioo Arif - made three distinct



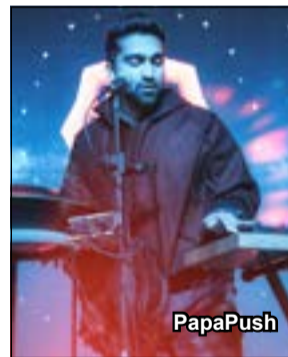
DJ Mysterioo Arif

remixes of the original song, over a span of six months.

"Ahmed gave it a drum and bass spin, while PapaPush went down the dubstep route and DJ Mysterioo added a house music feel to the song, and it was astounding to listen to and enjoy each version," Khalil explained. "I couldn't have imagined the song sounding so different yet unique, and I felt proud, inspired and in awe when I first listened to the songs."

In total, there are four songs on the EP, including the original *Midnight Blooms*.

Last year, the song earned the band the title of 'Debut Recording Artist of the Year'



PapaPush

at the Musivv Awards, while also being nominated for 'Band of the Year'.

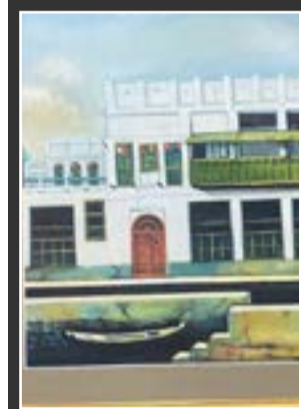
Musivv is a platform, in a digital magazine format, that discovers and develops independent musical artists in the UAE and the Middle East, and their awards has honoured more than 50 independent creatives since its inception in 2019.

Not one to rest on their laurels and despite a busy live performance and personal schedule, the band is already hard at work on its next single *Indus*, which is expected to be released over the summer.

For details, follow @hotboxgroove on Instagram.



GROOVY: EP cover



MINIATURE MASTER
Bringing heritage alive
SEE PAGE 2



LET THE MUSIC PLAY
Festival fervour
SEE PAGE 3



ROMANTIC RHAPSODY
New audio book
SEE PAGE 5



LEISURE SCENE
Summertime treats
SEE PAGES 4-5

Artistic abode



ART REPORT

By MELISSA NAZARETH
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A TRADITIONAL Bahraini house demolished in 1963 has been given a new life by a Yemeni architect who has created a miniature model of the historic dwelling.

The artistic recreation of the house was commissioned by its owner's granddaughter Faten Al Ashgar, and beautifully executed by popular miniaturist and multimedia artist Ali Moeladawilah.

The house was located in Fareej Al Fadhel (Al Fadhel neighbourhood) in Manama before it was razed.

Ali has crafted the model using a watercolour painting of the building as reference, while drawing from his experience as an architect for the structural details.

"Faten approached me requesting a custom piece for her grandfather's house, but the only memory they had left was an old watercolour painting, which lacked details," the 29-year-old who currently resides in Melbourne, Australia, told *GulfWeekly*.

"I have never visited Bahrain and so I had to research old photos of Bahraini houses to get a proper understanding of the architectural styles present at the time."

This is the creative's third collaboration with Saudi-based Faten who has previously bought two pieces – 'Maktabah' or miniature bookshelves – from Ali and is keen to buy more of his works.

Faten was born in Saudi but her maternal grandfather, who is originally Saudi Arabian, moved to Bahrain in the 1920s where he lived for many years.

"I never saw my grandfather's house, but my mother, uncles and aunts talked about it a lot and so I pictured it in my mind. I had an old painting of the house and thought of bringing it alive with a miniature creation," Faten said.

"Having bought other artworks from Ali last year, I thought he would be the right person to commission this



ARTIST: Ali

Faten approached me requesting a custom piece for her grandfather's house, but the only memory they had left was an old watercolour painting, which lacked details.

project. I like his attention to detail and his structural accuracy.

"When I saw the finished product, I found the architectural elements and colours were replicated closely. He even took the damaged and missing

balcony planks into consideration," she added.

Faten's family still lives in Bahrain and she hopes to visit the kingdom this month.

Though Ali has always been a creative with an 'obsession' with architecture, he dabbled in miniature art back in high school, when he built a 3D model of a library. Eventually, he enrolled in RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, to study architecture but quickly became 'disfranchised by the profession's lack of creativity'.

"I was always working on somebody else's same old boring designs, never my own," Ali said.

"I felt like my creative spark was dying and so I began exploring alternative

fields, which led me to start a business as a full-time artist.

"I came across several creatives pursuing miniature art while scrolling on *Instagram* and knew right away that I needed to give this a shot – it was the perfect outlet to express my passion for architecture and building.

"I use a variety of mediums, from clay, foam, wood, resins, acrylic paints, plaster, texture paste, and whatever gets the job done. I'm always exploring new materials and tools to push my craft," Ali revealed.

More recently, he has been exploring the world of 3D printing.

Like traditional artists would sell prints of their

paintings, Ali wanted to make his designs more accessible and began 3D printing designs that he created digitally, including DIY (do-it-yourself) kits that let you assemble your own pieces using 3D printed parts.

"The first of these kits that

I released performed better than expected and so I'm planning to design more. The bulk of my work, however, will remain handmade, from wood and clay carvings to hand painting and moulding," he added.



TRIBUTE: Ali's miniature model of the house



INSPIRATION: The painting of the house

BRAIN-BUSTERS

Quizmaster and *Radio Bahrain* host Shannon Crockett, who has been entertaining people across the island with his brain-teasing quiz night sessions, has offered to put *GulfWeekly* readers' general knowledge to the test. Join in the fun every Thursday with Shannon's seven brain-busters.

1. 'It's Gonna Be May' has become an Internet joke over the years and is a reference to which pop group?
2. What is a Hindi word meaning 'dusty' or 'earth' and is also a colour in English?
3. What is the Welsh dish Laverbread made of?
4. An atomic pile was an early name for what?
5. Agathidium bushi, named after US president George W Bush in 2005, is a species of what?
6. Which body of water is around 34 per cent salt and virtually

Gulf Weekly

Catch Shannon's weekly **BRAIN-BUSTERS** every Thursday in *Gulf Weekly*



impossible to swim in?
7. May 4th is often associated with which famous movie franchise?

ANSWERS
1. I. NSYNS
2. Khaki
3. Seaweed
4. Nuclear Reactor
5. Beetle
6. The Dead Sea
7. Star Wars



ALL TOGETHER NOW: Participants compete in the Large Vocal Ensemble category at the Grand Final

COMMUNITY REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
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MORE than 400 musicians from 17 schools across Bahrain came together this week to share their talents and compete for the trophies during a recently held student music festival.

The St Christopher's Music Festival took place from April 28 to 30 at the school's Saar and Isa Town campuses in more than 14 categories.

"The festival aims to draw together young musicians of all levels from schools throughout Bahrain, to participate in a friendly, competitive musical event," the school's music director Dennis Haggerty told *GulfWeekly*.

"It provides a platform for our young musicians to share their considerable talents and celebrate success.

"This year, we introduced a new non-competitive class for Infant Choirs, and the Advanced Level for musicians at Grade 8 or above continued this year along with Rock and Pop Ensemble."

Solo categories at this year's competition also included Voice, Piano and Instrumental across four levels of musical accomplishment.

In addition, group categories included large and small instrumental and vocal ensembles.

"In the solo category, medals for first, second and third place were awarded for Piano, Instrumental and Vocal for each of the four levels," the organisers added.

"The winners of each category progressed to the Grand Final on Tuesday, April 30 and competed to achieve the overall level winner.

"The top two performances in each ensemble category automatically progressed to the Grand Final and competed against each other

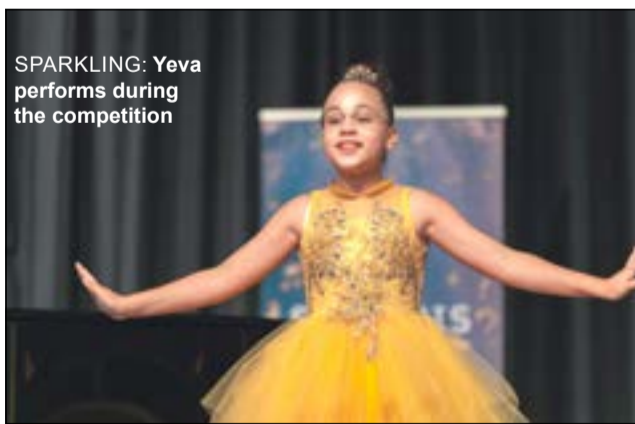
Talents in tune



STARS: Vaani and Amyra perform during the Small Vocal Ensemble competition



TOP: Members of the Lahar Choirs collect their Large Vocal Ensemble trophy



SPARKLING: Yeva performs during the competition

for the winner's cup or shield.

"Certificates were awarded at the Grand Final to all competitors who placed first, second and third in all categories to recognise their outstanding achievement."

St Chris student Mohamed Alnajjar wowed judges with his piano performance,

winning the Advanced Level Music trophy, while Thomas Valverde Kosinsky (St Chris) took home the Level 3, Rayyan BinZaiman (Tubli Boys Primary School) the Level 2 and Yeva Puckhuva (British School Bahrain) the Level 1 trophies in the same category.

Lahan Choirs (St Chris)

topped the Primary Large Vocal Ensemble category, while St Chris Senior Wind Band brought home the Primary Large Instrumental Ensemble trophy.

Rayyan and Ranim, from the Tubli Boys Primary School and Ibn Khuldoon School, won the Small Instrumental Ensemble trophy, while Vaani Sethi and Amyra Anand (St Chris) took the Primary Small Vocal Ensemble award.

St Chris Senior Wind Band also won the Secondary Large Instrumental Ensemble trophy, and their school mates Yasmeen Majed and Mohammed Alnajjar took the Secondary Small Instrumental Ensemble trophy.

Treble Trouble (St Chris) topped the Secondary Small

Vocal Ensemble trophy, while the Jawhara choir won the Secondary Large Vocal Ensemble trophy.

In the standalone Rock and Pop competition, Yeva Puckhuva (British School of Bahrain) was recognised as the most promising performer, while The Pop Rocks won the Ensemble trophy.

"The Grand Final was a celebration of music with trophies presented, to the overall winners of each level," the organisers noted.

This year's competition was adjudicated by EdExcel A Level music associate examiner Louisa Danmeri, recognised pianist and music teacher Alena Kastsukevich, Manama Singers lead Jo Diciolla and Jazz Orchestra of Bahrain conductor Scott Rogal.



DUO: Rayyan and Ranim take the stage

Leisure Scene

What's on guide by
Julia Cassano



FLAVOURFUL FIESTA

GET together with your family and loved ones and enjoy the exquisite events that Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay has to offer this month. The hotel has kickstarted its new Latin American-themed brunch, with an array of vibrant flavours and colours, at the Bahrain Bay Kitchen.

Choose from enchiladas, nachos or tacos ... all crafted to perfection. And, to end the parade of irresistible flavours, delicious desserts such as crisp churros and velvety flan de queso will be served.

While parents enjoy the festivities, the hotel has specially lined up a newly decorated children's corner, buffet and activities, sure to keep the youngsters entertained.

From 1pm to 4pm tomorrow (Friday), the brunch costs BD35 including soft beverages, BD48 inclusive of selected beverages and BD65 inclusive of a premium package.

Children under six years dine with the hotel's compliments and those aged six to 12 can avail a 50 per cent discount.

Meanwhile, CUT by Wolfgang Puck has lined up its elevated Bubbly Brunch, where you can savour the finest selection of beverages and classic dishes made by executive chef Brian Becher and his team tomorrow (Friday). From 12.30pm



TASTY: Enchiladas at the hotel's Cinco De Mayo Brunch

to 3.30pm, the dining affair costs BD70 inclusive of free flow bubbly beverages.

Guests can also try out some new dishes at Bay View Lounge. New additions include brie and bresaola salad, seabass livomese, pappardelle cacciatora, lobster ravioli and more. It is available everyday from 11am to 11pm, priced as a la carte.

For a one-of-a-kind relaxation, opt for the hotel's new spa treatments. Discover the newly launched Biologique Recherche treatments, where your skin will be pampered to perfection. Available everyday from 10am to 10pm, the facial treatments range between BD70 and BD95, and body treatments from BD80 to BD85 at The Spa.

For more information or bookings, contact 17115500 or 17115044.



AMBIENCE: Amber Night

GLOBAL

LUXURY: Thai Lounge



H EAD to the Ritz-Carlton Bahrain for a dining experience like no other.

Embark on a culinary adventure at La Med's enchanted Amber Night that offers an array of exquisite dishes inspired by



FUN TIME: The club has lined up activities for children



DELICIOUS: Desserts at Royal Golf Club's Royal Gourmet

AN EVENING OF INSIGHT AND LAUGHTER

R ENOWNED Palestinian-American comedian and writer Amer Zahr is set to stage his highly-anticipated show *The Truth* this weekend.

Guests can expect an evening of laughter, insight and honesty as Amer tackles a range of topics as he draws on his Palestinian-American experiences, at The Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel, Residence and Spa in Manama on Saturday, at 5pm and 8pm.

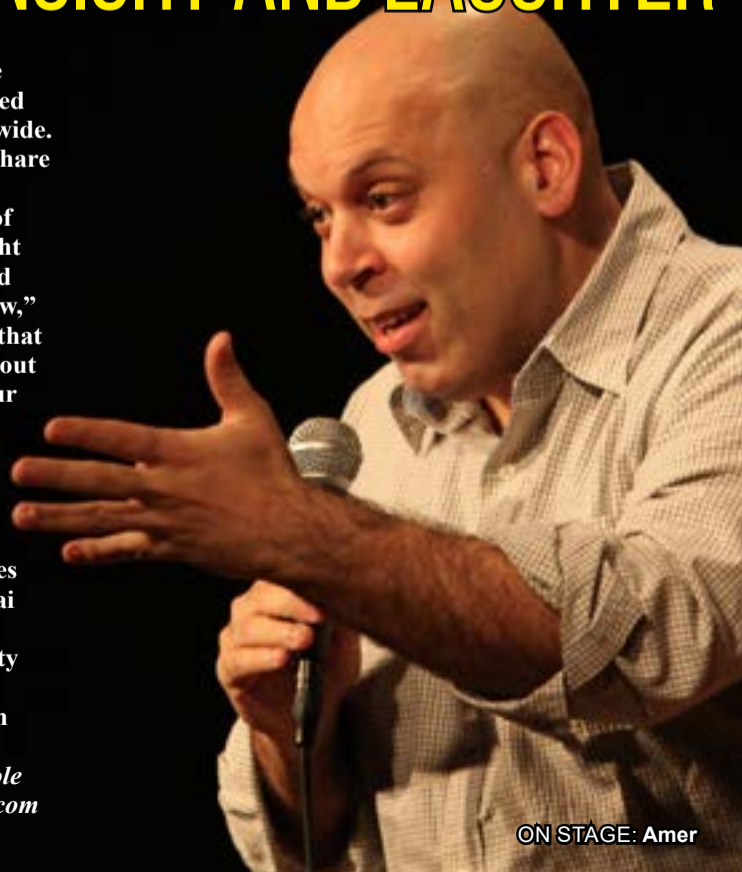
Blending humour with poignant social commentary, *The Truth* explores cultural nuances, identity, and the absurdities of everyday life. Amer's

sharp wit and stage presence have earned him acclaim worldwide.

"I am thrilled to share *The Truth* with the vibrant audiences of Bahrain, and I might make you laugh and cry in the same show," Amer said, adding that 'comedy can bring out every emotion in our hearts'.

As part of his wider tour across the region, Amer will grace the stage at prestigious venues including The Dubai Opera House, The American University of Kuwait and The Rainbow Theatre in Jordan.

Tickets are available online, www.tktfox.com and at the venue.



ON STAGE: Amer

BLISS ON A PLATE!

G ET ready for a new and improved culinary experience that will leave your tastebuds dancing with joy at the Royal Golf Club.

Step into Links and relish premium-quality steaks cooked to perfection, from 6pm. The tasty feast and the delightful atmosphere will give you a night to remember. For more information or reservations, contact 39007546.

For a one-of-a-kind summer experience, opt for Royal Golf Club's summer camp which offers sports, dance and kindergarten activities for children. They will also have the opportunity to learn golf techniques from PGA (Professional Golfers' Association) professionals.

Set to begin from June 30, the camp will be held on Sunday, Tuesday and

Thursday, 9.30am to 1pm, and costs BD25 per day or BD60 per week.

The camp also offers add-ons, including a one-hour golf season with PGA professional certified coach for BD8 (one hour a week) or BD32 per month.

To register, call 33001261 or 17750777. Guests have until May 15 to enjoy a 15 per cent early bird discount and special discounts are available for Royal Golf Club members as well as Riffa Views residents.

Meanwhile, guests can enjoy a regal affair with scrumptious cakes and desserts. Combining traditional baking with modern creativity, talented chefs have whipped up mesmerising cakes, pastries and more, making sure to satisfy your sweet tooth.

For orders, call 32184647; all orders must be placed 24 hours in advance.

Weekly Entertainment

CUISINE ON RITZ MENU



Corazones which offers two refreshing beverages, or the Tres Amigos specials which has lined up three mouth-watering tacos and three flavourful cocktails, from 6pm to 10pm. The price starts at BD12.

Meanwhile, a flavourful Thai bento box will transport you to Thailand's vibrant culinary culture. Whether you're savouring the crispy textures of tempura or exploring the rich flavours of stir-fried delights, every dish promises a delectable infusion of flavours, everyday from 1pm to 6pm at Thai Lounge.

For more information call 17586499, 17586401 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com.

the rich flavours and spices of the Arabian Peninsula.

The dining affair costs BD29 inclusive of tea and Arabic coffee, BD35 inclusive of soft beverages, BD45 with selected beverages and BD55 for a private,

legendary experience, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 7pm to 10.30pm.

Get ready for a groovy weekend at Cantina Kahlo's Tropical Saturdays. Guests can embrace the tropical spirit with the Dos

MUNCH AND BRUNCH AT HILTON

AN exciting line-up of promotional activities are available at Hilton Bahrain this month.

Enjoy the hotel's Cinco De Mayo Friday Brunch, where electrifying tunes and one-of-a-kind dishes are sure to spice up your day, from 12.30pm to 4pm. The brunch at Origin Kitchen and Culture costs BD28 net with unlimited beverages, and BD39 net with unlimited selected beverages.

Don't miss out on Origin Kitchen and Culture's epic Seafood Night, where mouth-watering dishes and irresistible flavours from the sea will make for an unforgettable experience tonight (Thursday), from 7pm to 10pm.

It's priced at BD32 net with



COOL: A delicious beverage at Hilton Bahrain

unlimited selected beverages and BD25 net inclusive of unlimited soft beverages.

Meanwhile, guests can start

their day with a scrumptious breakfast buffet at Origin Kitchen and Culture, available daily from 6.30am to 10.30am. The feast featuring breakfast classics is priced at BD13 net per person.

Every Friday, from 5pm to 7pm, visitors to Cocoluna Lounge can take part in an epic party, featuring a DJ and selected beverages. At the same location on Wednesdays, from 7pm to midnight, ladies can avail three complimentary drinks at Ladies' Night.

At Block 44, patrons can enjoy the Afro Series from 9pm to 2am, and a 50 per cent discount on selected beverages from 9pm to 11pm on Thursday. Ladies also get two free drinks.

Elevate your Friday at Block 44's Salsa Nights, from 9pm to 2am. Ladies can avail two complimentary beverages.

End the weekend at Hilton Bahrain's Society Club Lounge. Perched high on the 44th floor, the Society offers a distinctive night-time experience, combining the energy of the city and captivating music from Monday to Saturday, 8pm to 2.30am. For more information or bookings, contact 33690081 or 33692013.



CATCH OF THE DAY: Seafood Night

Culture Weekly

BOOK REPORT
By MELISSA NAZARETH
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BAHRAIN-BASED author Preety Praveen has announced the release of her audiobook in June, which is based on her debut novel and will set the stage for the sequel expected to hit the shelves in July.

Cross Connection is a love story that will make you believe in the power of destiny and revolves around Simar, who hails from the North-Indian state of Punjab.

She moves to Tamil Nadu in the south of the sub-continent to pursue her degree in dentistry. But fate has other plans. While Simar is struggling to survive in her 'new world', a plot twist brings Naveen into her life – until he has to leave India.

"The book is based on my life experiences and my love story but of course I have fictionalised parts of it for creative purposes," Preety told *GulfWeekly*.

"The print edition of the novel was released in 2020 but my publishers recently proposed working on an audiobook, which has come at a great time, considering the sequel *A Pocket Full of Promises* will be out this year."

It was Preety's husband who suggested she write a story about their romantic journey as her debut novel when she first shared her idea of becoming an author with him.

The trained psychologist and 'writer at heart' then penned down the 203-page book, which was picked up by Indian self-publishing platform Blue Rose Publishers.

"It was indeed a nostalgic experience and I relived some beautiful moments," Preety said.

"I strongly believe that if one has family support, things always work out smoothly and successfully."

The 49-year-old has lived in Bahrain since 2009, with her husband, Praveen, who works with Hilal Computers, daughter, Prarthana, who attends New Millennium School, and son Pranav who is now pursuing his higher education in Bangalore. Preety lived in Bangalore for a year during the Covid-19 pandemic, but returned in late 2020. She still travels to visit Pranav.

Preety is involved in numerous projects, her last



ROMANTIC: Preety takes a walk down memory lane reading the story inspired by her life

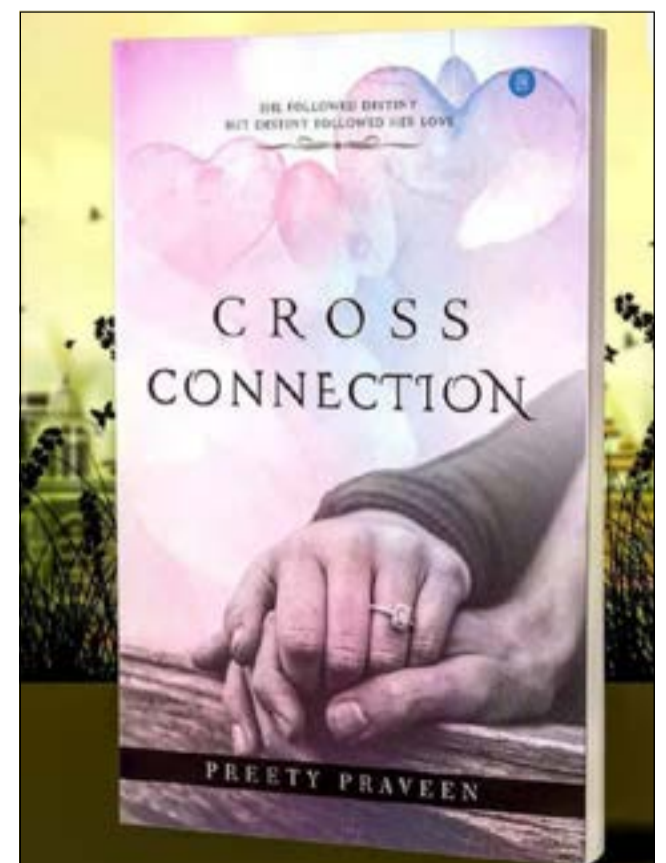
A real-life love story

major one being an hour-long Hindi movie *Bas Ik Vaari*, which was screened at Mukta Cinema and can now be watched on *Pocket Films* channel on YouTube.

"I've written and directed many Hindi and English theatre plays and short movies," adds the social activist who loves to

support the needy and uses her degree in psychology to provide free-of-cost services, both online and offline.

Cross Connection is also available on Kindle and the audiobook can be purchased on various platforms including Amazon, Google Play, and Apple Books.



Pulse of Pop

AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY NAMAN ARORA

DEEPLY PERSONAL

RENOWNED musician St Vincent, the artistic persona of Anne Erin Clark, has released her seventh studio album, *All Born Screaming*, with the opus marking a bold new chapter in her critically acclaimed career.

In the self-produced record, the American artist ventures into a vibrant and genre-defying soundscape she dubs 'post-plague pop.' *All Born Screaming* pulsates with the raw energy of a world emerging from a period of collective trauma.

The album delves into themes of vulnerability, resilience, and the chaotic beauty of existence, all delivered with St Vincent's signature intensity. Opening with the synth-driven anthem *Hell Is Near*, the album sets the tone for its exploration of societal anxieties and personal struggles.

A cinematic ballad *Reckless* follows, showcasing St Vincent's soaring vocals and introspective lyricism.

Singles like *Broken Man* and *Flea* showcase the album's infectious groove, drawing inspiration from 70's funk and disco while retaining St Vincent's

avant-garde sensibilities.

Big Time Nothing injects a dose of playful sarcasm into the mix, offering a commentary on the absurdity of modern life.

However, the album isn't solely focused on danceable rhythms. Tracks like *Violent Times* and *The Power's Out* delve into darker territory,

UNVEILED: The album cover

confronting the anxieties of the current socio-political climate.

Sweetest Fruit offers a moment of melancholic reflection, while the title track, featuring Cate Le Bon, closes the album with a defiant roar of acceptance and liberation.

All Born Screaming

embraces experimentation, seamlessly blending elements of rock, pop, funk, and electronica into a cohesive and electrifying sonic tapestry. Collaborations with musicians like Dave Grohl and contributions from second-wave ska and dub pioneers further enrich the album's sonic palette.

"This record is 100 per cent lived experience. I've felt every lyric on it," St Vincent explained.

This raw honesty resonates throughout the album, making *All Born Screaming* a deeply personal and relatable experience for the listener.

It's an album that demands to be experienced, a potent and cathartic journey through the complexities of the human condition in a post-pandemic world. Primarily known for alternative rock, St Vincent's music often veers into pop, funk, and electronica.

Praised for her innovative and genre-bending music, she's often recognised as one of the best guitarists of the 21st century, ranking 26th on Rolling Stone's list of the greatest guitarists of all time in 2023.

CAST: The series is set to premiere today



A CUT ABOVE THE REST!

A 'gem' of a series is set to hit Netflix this weekend as visionary Indian director Sanjay Leela Bhansali takes viewers on a journey through a historic diamond market of the pre-Partition subcontinent.

The highly anticipated *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar* show, is set to premiere today, promising a captivating journey into the lives of courtesans in

pre-independent India, set against the backdrop of a burgeoning freedom movement. Sanjay, a director known for his cinematic masterpieces, has been polishing and working on the series for more than 14 years.

The show delves into the complexities of Heeramandi, a once-thriving diamond market in Lahore that, under British rule, transformed into a red-light district. Here, courtesans, known as 'tawaifs', held immense power and influence, as their artistry and grace captivated the hearts of patrons. The narrative revolves around Mallikajaan, the reigning queen of an elite courtesan house. Her position is threatened by the arrival of Fareedan, the daughter of her late nemesis, who seeks to cut a new facet into the established order. As their

rivalry unfolds, the series explores themes of love, betrayal, and the unwavering spirit of these women amidst a changing world.

Heeramandi boasts a stellar ensemble cast, including seasoned actors like Manisha Koirala and Sonakshi Sinha, alongside rising stars like Aditi Rao Hydari, Richa Chadha, Sanjeeda Sheikh, and Sharmin Segal.

Each actress brings their own unique talent and persona to the screen, portraying the diverse experiences and struggles of the courtesans.

Sanjay, known for his meticulous attention to detail, has painstakingly recreated the grandeur of Heeramandi, showcasing the opulent costumes, intricate dance performances, and the vibrant music that defined the era.

Set to be much more than just a period drama, *Heeramandi* is a poignant exploration of female agency within a restrictive social structure. The series delves into the complexities of their relationships, their fight for independence, and the sacrifices they make to survive and thrive in a world dominated by men.

It promises to be a visual spectacle, a celebration of art and culture, and a thought-provoking exploration of a rarely-seen chapter in Indian history.



Sanjay

MONSTROUS SECRETS

DELVE into the dark side of high school popularity with Singaporean writer Cindy RX He's highly anticipated debut novel, *Perfect Little Monsters*.

Set to be released next Tuesday, May 7, this young adult psychological thriller promises a chilling exploration of bullying, hidden secrets, and the explosive consequences that follow.

The story centres on Ella Moore, the seemingly perfect queen bee of Sierton High. Beautiful, popular, and seemingly untouchable, Ella casts a long shadow of envy and resentment amongst her peers. However, when Ella is found murdered at her own

party, the facade of perfection crumbles, leaving behind a school riddled with suspects.

With a cast of characters harbouring their own dark secrets and motives, *Perfect Little Monsters* dives deep into the complexities of high school dynamics. Each member of Ella's inner circle, the cheerleading squad, becomes a suspect:

Dawn, the new girl struggling with a mysterious past; Lucy, battling a hidden eating disorder; and Naomi, grappling with her biracial identity.

As the investigation unfolds, the line between friend and foe blurs, leaving readers questioning who truly wanted Ella gone.

Perfect Little Monsters has already garnered rave reviews, praised for its 'heart-pounding, harrowing, and



twisty tale' that delves into the devastating consequences of bullying. Critics have lauded the novel's 'characters you'll love to hate' and its 'shocking delight' of an ending that will leave readers breathless.

This fast-paced, dark, and suspenseful novel promises an unforgettable journey into the underbelly of high school life. With its exploration of relevant themes like bullying, social media pressures, and the complexities of teenage relationships, *Perfect Little Monsters* is poised to resonate with readers of all ages.

Motoring Weekly

The top motoring and motorsport news

Scripting history!

It was a golden weekend for Bahrain Victorious 13 with an Ironman win for Kat Matthews and a World Cup win for Max Stapley, writes Lisa Pringle.

Matthews successfully defended her Ironman North America Championship title in Texas on Saturday in a dramatic come-from-behind victory.

The British long-course champion hurdled challenges before and after the starting line to produce the win over two minutes faster than the rest of the field.

Matthews was well-recovered from the calf tear that ended her T100 Miami race early last March, producing the day's fastest marathon to negate the effects of a five-minute bike drafting penalty and a four-minute deficit on the swim.

It closely mirrored the circumstances of Matthews' win last year, when she overhauled a nine-minute deficit after the bike to clinch victory in the final kilometres of the marathon.

It had also been part of her comeback to racing after a car collision ruled her out of competing at the 2022 Ironman World Championship in Kona.

"I didn't really think I would get to complete the entire race, to be honest. I've had an interesting and very optimistic build after suffering injury seven weeks ago, so I didn't really know what the run would hold," she said.

"There was something about returning as last year's winner – it felt like the entire crowd was cheering for me."

Along with retaining the title of Ironman North America Champion and securing her start at the Ironman World Championship in Nice, France, Matthews also drew first blood in the new Ironman Pro Series taking home the maximum 5,000 points toward the year-end standings and the opportunity to claim part of the \$1.3 million bonus pool per gender and the top

place bonus of \$200,000.

Stapley claimed his first ever World Triathlon victory at the World Triathlon Cup Chengdu on Monday. The Olympic distance race was one of the few remaining World Cup stops in the Olympic qualifying period with a start list of heavy hitters hunting for their Paris 2024 berth, but Stapley proved more than up for the challenge.

The British rising star figured in a motivated breakaway on the bike, and held strong on the run in a final four-way battle with Tayler Reid (NZL), Jonas Schomburg (GER), and Mark Devay (HUN).

On the final few kilometres, Stapley surged to take the lead with only Reid coming with him. But just as Reid came up to his shoulder for the pass, the Kiwi veered away vomiting from the exertion. Schomburg came past Reid, but Stapley stepped



CHAMPION: Matthews

on the gas to leave no doubt about who would break the tape. Reid recovered enough to deny Devay the last spot on the podium.

Stapley said, "There were a

few guys – we see each other in every race – in the break and we were gagging for it. So once [we had] gone I was just motivating the troops to get it going. If I would have

finished 30th at least I would have committed to it. That's how I want to race – swim, bike, run. If I die out on the course, I die out on the course."

This coming weekend Lauren Parker lines up for the Paracycling World Cup race in Belgium, while Kate Waugh takes on some French Grand Prix racing.

WOLFF KNOCKS BACK 'RUMOURS' ABOUT VERSTAPPEN TALKS

MERCEDES Formula One team boss Toto Wolff has knocked back speculation about a meeting with Max Verstappen's management after this weekend's Miami Grand Prix.

Mercedes are looking for a replacement for seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton, who is joining Ferrari at the end of the season.

Reports in Germany have suggested Verstappen's father Jos and manager Raymond Vermeulen would meet Mercedes team co-owners Wolff, Ineos boss Jim Ratcliffe and Mercedes Benz CEO Ola Kallenius.

Asked about it at an event in New York for team partner WhatsApp, with a race car emoji projected onto the Empire State Building lit up in green, Wolff told *Reuters Television*: "No,



ALL SMILES: Hamilton shares a moment with members of his team as he takes part in the lighting ceremony at the Empire State Building in New York City

that's one of the rumours.

"People make up meetings, make up what's happening with the drivers but these things should be behind closed doors and everything that's been out there was not really the right thing."

Wolff, who has known Verstappen's father for years, has made no secret that he would like to sign Verstappen

as Hamilton's replacement although the Dutch driver has a Red Bull contract until 2028.

Verstappen is cruising towards his fourth successive title with Red Bull, having won four of five races so far this season, despite internal divisions resulting from a female employee's allegations of inappropriate behaviour

against team boss Christian Horner.

Horner has been cleared of the allegations, which he denied, and remains in charge but Verstappen senior has said the team risks being torn apart if Horner stayed.

The future of the team's top designer Adrian Newey is also uncertain, with media reports last week that the technical head was seeking to leave Red Bull.

"Adrian Newey is an iconic engineer in Formula One with a great track record and again, also there are so many people talking about what he eventually might do and whether he leaves Red Bull or not," said Wolff.

"I'm just looking at it like a fan and watching that space." Mercedes are bringing an upgrade package to Miami after a patchy season so far.

Hamilton finished runner-up in the first sprint of the season in Shanghai on April 24 but has otherwise

yet to finish higher than seventh. Team mate George Russell has a best of fifth and Mercedes are fourth overall.

"We don't really know what to expect because it's been a tricky season so far. Let's see what the stopwatch says," said Wolff, who attended the event with Hamilton.

Hamilton took the wheel at a Formula One demonstration run on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue on Tuesday.

The Mercedes car also has a 'WhatsApp button' on the steering wheel that drivers can press when they want to talk to their engineers.

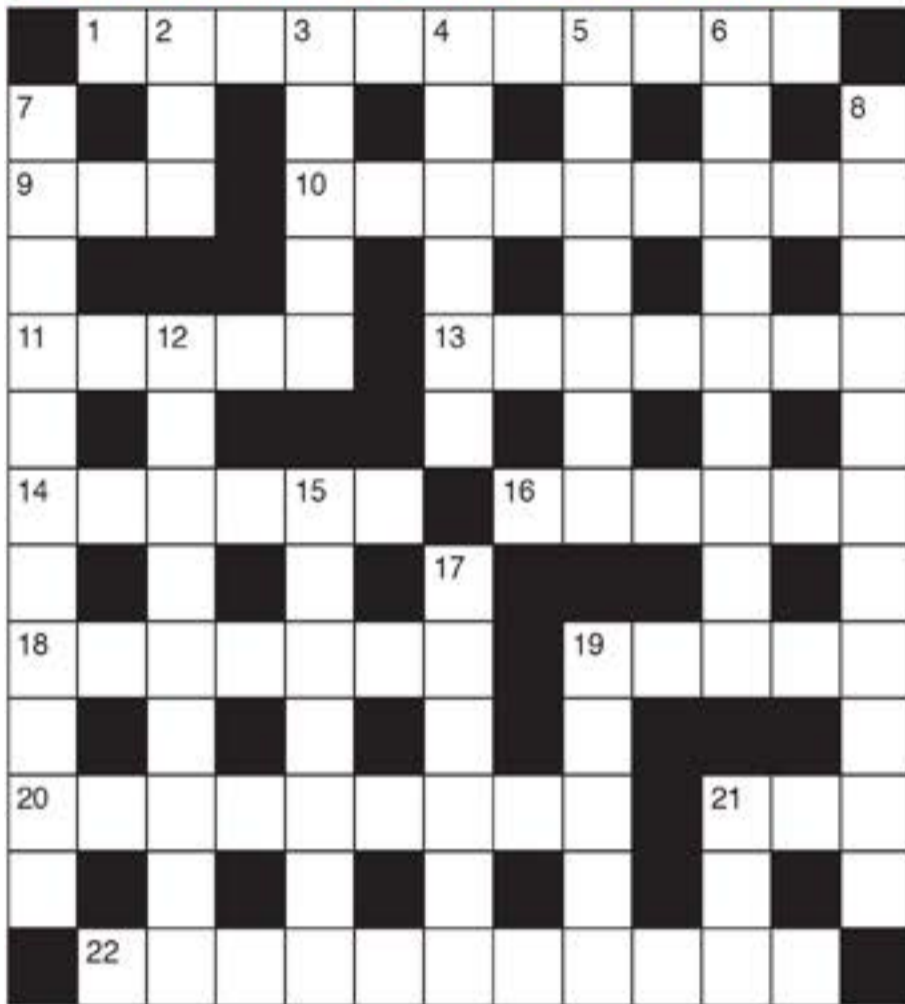
"WhatsApp is all about secure and instant communication and the main interaction between the driver and the engineers is via that button... it's such an innovative idea that all of us came up with and we're very proud," said Wolff.

Time Out



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crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

- 1. Preachers (11)
- 9. Base (3)
- 10. Complicated (9)
- 11. Room (5)
- 13. Closest (7)
- 14. Comprehend (6)
- 16. Pill (6)
- 18. Unfeigned (7)
- 19. Spring month (5)
- 20. Leader (9)
- 21. Bind (3)
- 22. Penury (11)

DOWN

- 2. Pledge (3)
- 3. Artless (5)
- 4. Prolong (6)
- 5. Copy (7)
- 6. Wayfarer (9)
- 7. Stingy (5-6)
- 8. Abstainer (11)
- 12. Mindful (9)
- 15. Unfold (4,3)
- 17. Oppose (6)
- 19. Assign (5)
- 21. Also (3)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... played policewoman Jackie Reid in the UK television series *Taggart*?
WHAT ... is the name of the group of fascists led by Roderick Spode in stories by P.G. Wodehouse?
WHERE ... was Dame Eugenia Charles the Prime Minister from 1980-95?
WHEN ... did the comedian Groucho Marx die?
WHO ... was US Secretary of State from 1993-97?
WHAT ... is the standard unit of currency of Grenada?
WHERE ... in England is the village of Cockayne?
WHEN ... did Marlon Brando's actress sister Jocelyn die?

just so

CLAUDIUS

praise
 praise
 praise
 praise
 herring

PARKE
 HYDE

course course
 course course
 par

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 1 Deck; 3 Relapses; 9 Spanner; 10 Nonce; 11 Respectfully; 13 Become; 15 Scotch; 17 Consignments; 20 Rabbi; 21 Nankeen; 22 Parental; 23 Neat.

Down: 1 Describe; 2 Crass; 4 Errata; 5 Announcement; 6 Singlet; 7 Seer; 8 Intermission; 12 Chestnut; 14 Crowbar; 16 Agenda; 18 Niece; 19 Prop.

JUST SO: A double bend. From top to bottom, Shadow cabinet, A basket case.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Harry Harrison; Noel Edmonds; 52, Festive Road; 1975; Fritz Lang; Me and My Girl; Peru; 1991.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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