

COMMUNITY REPORT
By MELISSA NAZARETH
melissa@gdnmedia.bh

ONE of Bahrain's oldest choirs and young talents at a local university will come together as one voice for their debut collaboration, **Chorus of Cultures**, a spectacular musical concert set to be staged on May 23.

Formed more than 50 years ago, Manama Singers, together with the RCSI Medical University of Bahrain Choir, will take enthusiasts on an exciting journey through language, rhythm, and harmony, across continents and cultures, conjuring an 'unforgettable evening of musical unity'.

The two-hour concert presented by more than 70 singers will tell tales from around the world, presenting a rich tapestry of global choral and solo music – from the soulful call of African folk melodies to the dramatic flair of classical arias and the groove of contemporary popular hits.

"Manama Singers were looking for a conductor at the end of 2024, as our regular conductor Jo Dichiolla was taking some time out. We were lucky enough to find an exciting new conductor, South African Stefan Els, who is also the conductor and founder of RCSI Medical University of Bahrain Choir," Manama Singers chairperson Susan Scott told *GulfWeekly*.

"We started rehearsing a number of South African songs and then Stefan suggested a combined concert, which we thought was a wonderful idea. The concert, being multinational and cultural, grew to showcase different songs, but was also named so because both choirs have a remarkable number of nationalities," she added.

Manama Singers, which celebrated its golden jubilee three years ago, comprises more than 40 members across nationalities, including English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish, French, Italian, German, Swiss, Swedish, American, Indian, Pakistani, Malaysian, Kiwi (New Zealand), Jordanian, Lebanese and Zambian.

RCSI Medical University of Bahrain Choir, formed last year, currently has 32

FLASHBACK: A previous Manama Singers' concert



A symphony of cultures



BEHIND THE SCENES: Stefan leads a joint practice session at the college campus



members.

"Teaching African songs was a particularly fun challenge," choirs' conductor and RCSI Bahrain data analyst Stefan revealed.

"Getting everyone to learn the words, rhythms, and accompanying movements was a steep but rewarding learning curve," he added.

"Manama Singers were initially quite hesitant to let go of their choir folders and memorise the music, but they have overcome that

with great dedication."

This is the first time Manama Singers will be presenting without sheet music – printed notations meant to guide the performer about pitch, rhythm and other elements.

"While we've been rehearsing since mid-January, we've only had two combined weekend rehearsals, each about four hours long. We had to get creative with our rehearsal spaces at RCSI. Practising

on staircases helped with acoustics, and the altos even worked on their projection techniques in a car park at one point," the 34-year-old from Al Sayh, who has been living in Bahrain for the last six years, said, highlighting some memorable moments behind the scenes.

US expatriate Amanda Pilmer, who moved to the kingdom in August last year, shared her experience and excitement for the show.

"It's been great meeting all

these new people, who are so welcoming. I'm a mum of two so, spending that one day a week rehearsing has given me an outlet," the 40-year-old from Adliya said, adding that she will be presenting some solo acts at the concert.

The event will commence at 7pm at Downtown Rotana in Manama.

Tickets are available at Platinumlist.net, with early bird discounts until Sunday, May 11.



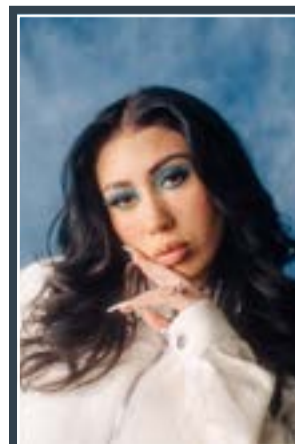
BEAUTIFUL GARDENS
Ritz appreciation
SEE PAGE 2



DIGITAL DETOX
Rise to the challenge
SEE PAGE 3



LEISURE SCENE
Out and about
SEE PAGES 4-5



PULSE OF POP
Music, books & more
SEE PAGE 6



CELEBRATION: Abhilash speaks during the event



COMMITTED: From left, maintenance manager Suresh Babu, senior landscape supervisor Govindan Vijayashankar and assistant director of engineering Ashok Manilalgandhi



BREATHTAKING: Media personnel on a tour of the property

HOSPITALITY REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
naman@gdnmedia.bh

Green fingers

In honour of the unsung heroes behind the iconic landscapes of The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain (RCB), the five-star property's management team held an appreciation ceremony last Wednesday to celebrate its gardening team.

Selected guests and media professionals were invited to join the celebration, which included a tour of the breathtaking property as well as a ceremony in honour of the 45-person crew.

"Our gardening team's efforts go far beyond maintaining the landscape – they shape the very soul of our resort," The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain general manager Bernard de Villèle explained.

"Their passion and dedication are the heart of the beauty our guests experience every day.

"I extend my deepest gratitude to these remarkable individuals, whose committed passion and meticulous care shape an unforgettable experience for every guest who visits."

Spanning 70 acres with 25

acres of carefully curated green space, RCB is known for its manicured lawns, vibrant flora and sweeping views of the Arabian Gulf.

The resort's gardens are home to 137 kinds of plants, including 950 date palms, 37 tree species, 28 varieties of shrubs, and 15 types each of ground cover and seasonal flowers.

And behind every bloom lies the handiwork of the resort's skilled gardeners – a team whose quiet commitment has been bringing life to the lush surroundings.

According to RCB engineering director Abhilash Coonjan, the gardens are central to the resort's identity.

"The gardens at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain are a living reflection of our brand's identity – one that blends timeless elegance, local authenticity and pure immersive luxury," he told the *GulfWeekly*.

"Architecturally, our resort is designed in harmony with

its coastal surroundings, embracing the charm of Arabian hospitality while offering a modern resort-style escape.

"At the heart of our landscape are 950 date palms, each locally sourced from Bahraini farms, anchoring our deep-rooted connection to the kingdom's heritage."

More than a visual delight, the gardens create a sense of serenity that enhances the guest experience.

However, maintaining such greenery in Bahrain's challenging climate is no easy task.

"The extreme heat, high humidity in the summer, saline-rich soil, and limited rainfall present significant challenges," Abhilash explained.

"It's both an art and a science that requires innovation and constant care."

The team also plays a vital role in the resort's sustainability efforts, growing herbs like oregano, mint, and

rosemary, and managing an efficient irrigation system powered by an on-site water purification plant, which generates approximately 2,500 cubic metres of water per day, with 1,000 cubic metres used daily for irrigation.

As a result of the team's efforts, the property proudly holds a Green Key certification for its environmental practices. "The gardens play a quiet yet powerful role in shaping the guest experience," Abhilash added.

"What truly stands out isn't just one moment, but the consistency, passion, and care that bring beauty to life for our guests every day."

The idea for the ceremony came from a desire to recognise this often unseen labour.

"The event was inspired to show appreciation and gratitude to the gardening team," he explained.

"Their efforts often go unseen by guests, but they are

key to creating the beautiful and peaceful environment that makes our resort special."

Looking ahead, Abhilash said the resort remains committed to evolving its

green spaces to 'improve the environment, introducing new species and enhancing the beauty of the property.'

At the heart of it all is a group of gardeners – quietly working, transforming, and now, finally, seen.

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. According to official rules, how much money do you get when you land on free parking in Monopoly?
2. Which bird is the international symbol of happiness?
3. For which fictional hero did Alexander Selkirk provide a model?
4. Which word beginning with the letter 'F' is the industry term for the small particles of tea leaves used almost exclusively in tea bags?
5. The Ganges flows through India and which other country?
6. Which Formula One circuit is located on an artificial island?
7. What word, meaning 'an intelligent, but single-minded person obsessed with a nonsocial hobby or pursuit' has its first documented appearance in the 1950 Dr Seuss book *If I Ran The Zoo*?



1. Nothing
2. Bluebird
3. Robinson Crusoe
4. Fannings
5. Bangladesh
6. Yes, Abu Dhabi
7. Nerd

ANSWERS



JOINING HANDS: The gardening team with RCB management, including Bernard de Villèle, centre, and Marriott International marketing and PR director Pamela Panduric, fifth from right, in the front row.

Are you ready for a detox?

In honour of mental health awareness month in May, *GulfWeekly* has taken up the 'digital detox' challenge where our '24x7 alert' reporters dared to 'switch off' for 24 hours! That means - no gadgets and no social media. This week, a section of them share their experience first-hand.



I went offline for a full day last weekend, out of curiosity, and to see how it would affect my mental health.

I wanted to see what would emerge in the quiet, in the spaces usually filled by pings, scrolling, and screen glow.

To make it through, I prepped the night before, like I was packing for a miniature expedition. My survival kit was analogue and modest: a Casio A168 to keep time, a small field notebook with my to-do list and gym workout handwritten from my phone, and a book for

company. Without my phone to default to, the day stretched open.

I read. I wrote. I did laundry, went grocery shopping, hit the gym, and later, joined a writers' meet.

The only time I had to reach for my phone was to make payments.

Boredom was the most surprising challenge. Not the kind that comes from having nothing to do, but the kind that shows up when emotions go unchecked.

When frustration and restlessness crept in, I noticed how often my instinct was to distract

myself with a screen.

Without the option, I had to sit with those feelings, or channel them into action.

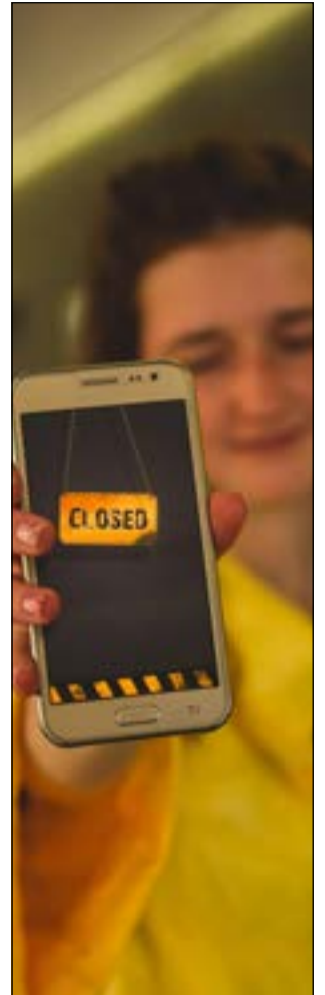
I won't pretend I've had an epiphany or that I'll be tossing my phone anytime soon.

The reality of my work makes a full-day detox impractical most of the time.

But I do want to carve out more intentional windows - four to six hours of no notifications, feeds or distractions.

A day offline wasn't revolutionary. But it was revealing.

- Naman Arora



NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN!

MENTAL health awareness month is the ideal opportunity to rethink lifestyle habits, especially those that greatly impact how we feel.

As part of our ongoing Speak Your Mind series, we explore how overexposure to gadgets, especially social media, affects mental health and challenge you, our family of readers, to 'switch off' for 24 hours.

Share your experience with us in not more than 100 words -

- Did you crave screentime?
- Were you able to return to your hobbies or discover new ones, perhaps?
- What did the challenge do for your social life?

Email gdnnews@gdnmedia.bh or comment @gdnonline on *Instagram* by May 28 with your full name, age and photo, and we will publish a selection of the experiences - only 'original' entries will be considered for the top submission and win a box of Raw Candy vegan chocolates as a token of our appreciation.

Together, let's keep the conversation going!

SPENDING a day without my phone was surprisingly grounding, even with an unexpected hiccup.

I had planned a quiet, gadget-free Friday, with a bit of shopping, of course.

The morning was peaceful, I made a tea, read a book, exercised at the gym and played with my lovely cat, Luna.

It was strange at first to not check social media, but I came to love it as I realised that the overload of information aggravated my anxiety.

After I finished my morning routine, I decided to go to the mall and do some shopping to kill time. Then came the curveball - I got into my car and it wouldn't start!

I reluctantly pulled out my phone and after Googling a few questions and realising the battery was dead, I called my car rental company's roadside assistance.

Once the battery was replaced, I was able to relax and enjoy the rest of the day without being on my phone, aside from a quick text from my

editor about an article.

However, that brief emergency did not pull me back into the digital world, but it did make me question whether I could truly live without a phone.

The modern world has become increasingly reliant on *Google*, *ChatGPT* and social media apps to fix problems and provide information on a range of topics.

And, while these tools are useful, it reminded me that they shouldn't be a constant, but rather a tool we use on occasion to make our lives easier.

- Julia Cassano



ONE thing that social media time took away from me is my passion for reading.

I used to be able to read an 800-page book in around two to three weeks, now I can barely read 20 pages a day without getting distracted or tired!

So I decided to use my afternoon time to read as I embarked on my detox challenge.

By the 70-page mark, my mom called me to help her, ironically, with technical problems she was having with her own phone, and I ended up spending some time in the living room with my family until it was time to go meet up with my friends for our board game night at around 6pm.

I did use *WhatsApp* to text them agreeing on a time, because it was easier than calling each one of them individually, but other than that I did not even feel the

desire to open any apps.

I had a great time with my friends, until around 1am and then headed home.

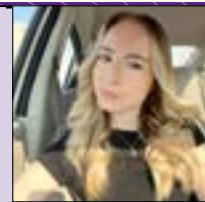
Though I give myself time off social media often, I allow myself to go on *YouTube*, so this time I wanted to see if I could go on without it. It definitely was extremely difficult, and the first thing I did after the 24 hours passed was to treat myself to a one-hour video essay! And what a treat that was.

- Rima Alhaddad



Leisure Scene

What's on guide by
Julia Cassano



GATHER your friends for a fantastic weekend at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain.

Dive into a taco extravaganza at Cantina Kahlo. With a variety of tacos and beverages, there is something to excite every palate. Choose from savoury meats, tender marinated chicken, zesty shrimp and flavourful vegetarian options.

It costs BD25, inclusive of two glasses of a special beverage, on Tuesday, from 6pm to 10pm.

The restaurant will also host a Brunch Fiesta that promises to stand out with Mexican flavours and authentic dishes. To add to the lively atmosphere, an energetic mariachi band will perform an array of traditional songs and beats.

The feast is priced at BD25 per person, inclusive of soft beverages and BD35 with selected beverages, on Saturday, from 1pm to 4pm.

Enjoy a range of

SPEC-TACO-LAR FEAST AT RITZ

delicious beverages, specially made with delicious herbal ingredients, at Nirvana's Herb All experience. Priced a la carte, it is available from Tuesdays to Sundays, noon

to 3pm and 7pm to 11pm.

Visitors can also relish a vibrant dining experience with Nirvana's traditional thali platter that offers a variety of dishes crafted to

perfection. From aromatic curries and tender tandoori specialties to fragrant rice, each platter is a feast of colours and flavours.

Pair your meal with a refreshing glass of lassi for the perfect touch.

The price is BD24 per person, inclusive of a lassi. It's available on Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday, from noon to 3pm and 7pm to 11pm.

Discover the exquisite flavours of Southeast Asia with Thai Lounge's exclusive menu, expertly curated by MasterChef 2021 champion Chef Daniel Lee. Each dish is a perfect fusion of great flavours and refined technique, reflecting his

DELICIOUS: A range of tacos to savour



VARIETY: Thali at Nirvana

award-winning mastery.

Priced a la carte, it is available everyday from 1pm

to 10pm.

For more information, contact 17586499 or email

TOP CHEFS CREATING RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

TWO celebrated chefs are set to join hands at a unique event hosted by the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay next week.

CUT by Wolfgang Puck will transform into the stage for a landmark culinary collaboration as executive chef Brian Becher welcomes top Bahraini chef Tala

Bashmi for an evening that promises to redefine the art of modern dining.

Together, the two chefs will craft a thoughtfully composed tasting menu, rich in personal meaning and creative expression.

Expect bold, evocative flavours and storytelling through every plate, on May 15, from 7pm. It

costs BD59net per person, and BD30 for a beverage package.

● Visitors can embrace the Italian way of unwinding at Bay View Lounge's Aperitivo Experience. Share artisanal boards layered with Italy's finest cheeses and cured meats until May 31, from 11am to 11.30pm. It's priced a la carte.



Chef Tala



Chef Brian

● Gather with family and friends for the ultimate Latin American Brunch at Bahrain Bay Kitchen, filled with vibrant flavours and festive rhythms. A colourful selection of appetisers, mains and sweet and tasty desserts will make for an unforgettable day.

Enjoy handmade enchiladas, empanadas and tacos, with all the fillings and more, tomorrow, May 9, from 1pm to 4pm.

It costs BD35 including soft beverages, and BD48 inclusive of a selected beverage package.

Children under six years dine with the hotel's compliments, while those aged six to 12 enjoy a 50 per cent discount.

● Savour the season's newest creations at re/Asian Cuisine, where bold flavours

meet refined technique. It is available on Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday, from 7pm to 11pm, and is priced a la carte.

● Join the seafood celebration at Byblos and savour the delicacies while overlooking the amazing views of Bahrain Bay.

Delight in refreshing crab and smoked salmon salad, among another dishes, until June 30. It is available from Tuesday to Sunday, 6pm to midnight, at BD52 for two people.

● Rejuvenate your body and mind with Moon Yoga, on May 12, from 6.30pm to 7.30pm. It's priced at BD6 per person for hotel guests and members and BD12 for outside guests.

For more information, contact 17115500 or 17115044.



TRULY ITALY: Aperitivo Experience

Leisure Scene

Weekly Entertainment



rc.bahrz.restaurant.
reservations@ritzcarlton.
com to reserve.

GLOBAL FLAVOURS ON SHERATON MENU

THE Sheraton Bahrain Hotel has lined up a memorable weekend of vibrant flavours and colourful creations.

Indulge in delicious dishes and refreshing beverages, all the while enjoying fantastic live entertainment at the Wild Brunch, tomorrow from 12.30pm to 5pm.

A soft beverage package costs BD36net per person, while a selected package costs BD46net per person. An extra-special bubbly package is priced at BD186net per person.

Guests can enjoy additional beverages, live music and delicious bites from 5pm to 9pm for an extra fee.

Enjoy a three-course special lunch menu at Wild. It features vibrant flavours from Spain, England, Peru and more, from Sunday to Thursday, noon to 3pm, at BD10.500net, including homemade iced tea.

Visit Golestan Persian Grill, where a delightful array of authentic dishes, from fragrant kebabs to unique house specialities, make for an unforgettable dining experience. It is open everyday, from noon to 3pm and 7pm to 11pm, and on weekends from noon to 4pm and 7pm to 11pm.



FRESH: Shrimp at the Wild Brunch

Free yourself from stress with relaxing packages at the Shine Spa. The first package includes a 60-minute back and shoulder massage or foot and leg massage with an express facial for BD60. The second package is a 90-minute full body massage, inclusive of a body scrub, for BD75. The packages are available until May 30.

The hotel is offering a padel court promotion for BD5 per hour from today until June 30, from 7am to 10pm. Racquetball is available at BD2 per person per hour.



COLOURFUL: A seafood dish

Host your dream wedding at the Sheraton Bahrain Hotel and celebrate your day in style with exceptional service, tailored packages and exclusive Marriott Bonvoy benefits. Prices start from BD27 per person, including all applicable taxes, for up to 200 guests on Thursdays and Fridays and 150 guests from Saturday to Wednesday.

Bookings also include triple Marriot Bonvoy points (300,000 points on eligible bookings), a complimentary one-night stay in a junior suite for the bride and groom, full hotel set-up and personalised professional service and unlimited soft drinks, juices, water, tea and coffee. The booking window is available until May 31 and is valid for weddings held until December 31.

For more information, call 17533533 or 38885409 on WhatsApp.



MOVIE TIME

HEAD down to CINECO Seef to watch the latest English-language films being shown this weekend.

THUNDERBOLTS* (PG-15)

After finding themselves ensnared in a death trap, an unconventional team of antiheroes must embark on a dangerous mission that will force them to confront the darkest corners of their past.

Actors: Florence Pugh, Sebastian Stan, David Harbour

Timings: 12.30pm, 3.15pm, 6pm, 8.45pm, 11.30pm

THE SURFER (15+)

A man returns to the idyllic beach of his childhood to surf with his son, but is humiliated by a group of powerful locals and drawn into a conflict that rises with the punishing heat of the summer and pushes him right to his breaking point.

Actors: Nicolas Cage, Julian McMahon, Nic Cassim

Timings: 1.30pm, 6.30pm, 11.30pm

UNTIL DAWN (18+)

One year after her sister Melanie mysteriously disappeared, Clover and her friends head into the remote valley where she vanished in search of answers. Exploring an abandoned visitor centre, they find themselves stalked by a masked killer and

horribly murdered by one.

Actors: Ella Rubin, Michael Cimino, Odessa A'zion

Timings: 4.45pm, 11.30pm

SNEAKS (PG)

When a designer sneaker unwittingly finds himself lost in New York City, he must dig deep into his sole in order to rescue his sister and return to his rightful owner.

Actors: Anthony Mackie, Keith David, Laurence Fishburne

Timings: 11am, 1pm, 3pm.

SUMPTUOUS:
Floating breakfast



BUFFET THAT'S A CLASS APART

ENJOY a list of delicious offerings at the InterContinental Bahrain this week.

Book the Legendz SteakHouse Brunch Affair, which offers an elevated buffet, featuring fantastic starters and food stations such as special cut meats, seafood and a French cheese station.

The dining affair will also feature an array of elegant pastries and tarts.

The day will be made even more special with live entertainment.

A la carte mains are available as well. It costs BD28net inclusive of soft beverages, and BD38 including unlimited selected beverages, tomorrow, from noon to 4pm. Children under six dine for free, while

those aged six to 12 enjoy a 50 per cent discount.

Meanwhile, every Monday, from 6pm to 11pm, guests can enjoy a special promotion, where they can buy one steak and enjoy a steak of equal or lesser value for free.

Meanwhile, start your weekend off right with a floating breakfast while overlooking the heart of Manama. It costs BD19net for two people everyday, from 9am to noon.

Elevate your lunch at Medzo, where curated business packages will make for a special day.

The offer starts from BD4.900 and is available from Sunday to Thursday, noon to 5pm.

For more information, contact 36967701.



FLAVOURFUL:
Business lunch

ARTISTIC SHOWCASE

THE fourth edition of the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS) Indo-Bahrain Dance and Music Festival will continue tonight, with a Mohiniyattam group production titled 'Uchchila'.

Methil Devika, renowned dancer and film star, will perform her own production which draws on inspiration from Muchilot Bhagavathi, a goddess believed to have originated from the sweat of Lord Shiva shed at the time of his stupendous dance on



PERFORMANCES: Uthara and Asha

Mount Kailasa.

On Friday, mother-and-daughter duo Asha Sharath and Uthara Sharath will perform Bharatanatyam, a classical dance form, at 7.30pm.

The festival is being held at the BKS Diamond Jubilee Hall until May 16.

For details, call 39691590 or 39617620.

FUN DAY AT DILMUN

DON'T miss out on the club's Friday Brunch special tomorrow, May 9, from 1pm to 5pm.

The fun day will feature live music, karaoke, children's soft play area and more.

It costs BD12 for food only and BD18 for food and

unlimited beverages.

Children under six dine for BD6. On Monday, guests can enjoy Curry Night, which includes any curry and a selected beverage, from noon to 10.30pm, at BD5.

For bookings, call 17690926.

Pulse of Pop

AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY RIMA ALHADDAD

BITTERSWEET SUMMER TALE

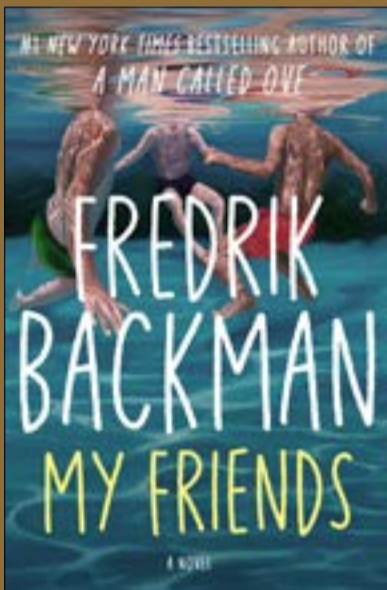
SWEDISH author Fredrik Backman's new novel *My Friends* has hit the shelves.

The tale is set in the summer, when a group of teenagers find refuge away from their difficult home, living in an abandoned pier, where they tell each other stories and joke around.

A painting by one of the three friends emerges 25 years later and lands into the hands of 18-year-old Louisa, who embarks on a cross-country journey to learn the story behind it, which also inspires her to unleash her own artistic self.

"It's a little story my brain and I have argued about for a few years, about art and artists, about being young and desperately wanting to create something, anything," Fredrik said in a social media post.

"It's also about growing up close to violence, outside and inside, and having friends who'd fight the whole universe for you. It's about those who saw greatness in you before you ever could. It's about being 17, and how a painting in a museum can knock you over so completely, it changes the



whole trajectory of your life," he added.

The #1 *New York Times* bestselling author is known for many novels, most famously, *A Man Called Ove*, which was published in English in 2013, and later adapted into a namesake Swedish comedy drama film in 2015, as well as a 2022 American film titled *A Man Called Otto* starring Tom Hanks and his son Truman.



TALENT: Kali

A MERICAN R&B and soul singer Kali Uchis is set to drop her fifth album titled *Sincerely*, tomorrow.

In an interview, Kali revealed that the upcoming project consisting of 14 tracks will be her most 'existential and honest work', stemming from a life-altering event, details of which she did not share.

"The album is about the complexities of life and finding ways to find joy in life despite the world. Finding

ways to appreciate every moment and not take life for granted. Treat every day special," she said.

"It's definitely the most beautiful body of work to me, and it's going to be, for me, the most meaningful and impactful," she added.

The artist started teasing the album earlier this year through 'Sincerely, mailboxes' in select cities where fans were able to send letters to the artist directly, and had a chance to unlock a box that contained unreleased

music from the album.

The second single from the album, titled *ILYSM IH* (abbreviation for I Love You So Much It Hurts), was teased with a snippet in a USB drive collected by a fan who got to unlock one of the boxes.

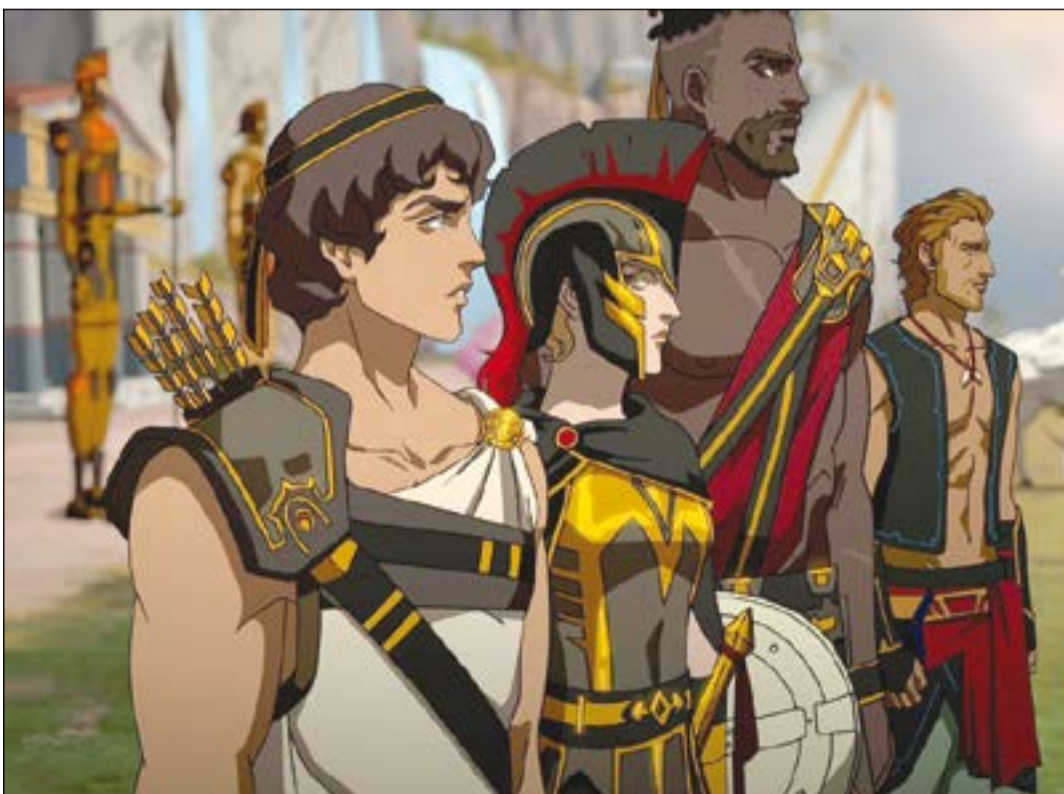
According to Kali, the song was inspired by her profound experience of motherhood and the immeasurable love she has for her son, whom she gave birth to last year.

Another fan also got to receive a drive featuring

a snippet of the yet to be released track, *All I Can Say*.

The songwriter created a special ILYSMatcha latte that fans were able to order for a limited time at a coffee shop in Los Angeles, California, where she showed up and made the drinks alongside the shop's employees.

Born Karly Marina Loaiza, the Colombian-American artist embarked on her career in 2012 and earned recognition in 2015 for her debut extended play *Por Vida* ('for life' in Spanish).



MYTHICAL: A shot from the series

FAMILY MATTERS

THE third and final season of the Netflix animated series *Blood of Zeus* is out.

Set in mythical ancient Greece, the series revolves around Heron (voiced by Derek Phillips), the son of Zeus (voiced by Jason O'Mara), who tries to save Olympus and Earth from a demonic army after discovering his true heritage.

"Greek mythology is just one big family soap opera," Charley Parapanides, who created the series with his brother Vlas Parapanides, said in an interview.

"We grew up in a very big, tight-knit Greek family. So I think that was always, even subliminally, part of the draw for us making this show. It's about families and it all just meshed," he added.

First premiered in 2020, the series garnered a positive feedback and critical

acclaim for having a fresh take on Greek mythology. It was praised for its imagery and voice acting and the two seasons received a 100 per cent score on *Rotten Tomatoes*.

"We come from the theatre and the live-action space, so we wanted the story to have emotional truth," Vlas explained.

"We wanted to take that authenticity that you normally find in live-action, feature dramas and bring that to the animated space.

"Some people who watch this show don't even realise it, but Powerhouse (the animation studio behind the series) and our composers would manipulate the lighting and colour of the eyes to show expression.

"Every animated project is on a budget, and we all use cheats to help sell what we're trying to do. The eyes were a big part of that," he added.

Motoring Weekly

The top motoring and motorsport news

COMMUNITY REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
naman@gdnmedia.bh

MOTORSPORT maverick Faten Amin, the first Bahraini woman in a host of top organising roles in the sport, has taken her journey off-road with her collection of unique Lego F1 sets.

The 39-year-old Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) digital content executive is blending her love for the sport with her relatively recent hobby of Lego set-building.

“I have 66 sets so far, but not all of them are built – about 14 to 15 sets are not built yet,” she told *GulfWeekly* during the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix held at the BIC in mid-April.

“I like to have a collection, rather than having one or two sets, and Lego kept bringing out more sets, so my hobby just keep on growing.”

But Faten is more than just a collector. She’s created a unique niche for herself by documenting her Lego builds through ASMR-style videos on *TikTok*, capturing the satisfying clicks of each piece coming together.

“When I build the sets, I do a video where it’s music-free to keep the focus on the ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) click, making sure that it is very clear,” she added.

Last year, Faten made history as the first Bahraini woman to serve as Clerk Of the Course (COC) for the FIA Formula 3 Championship during the 2024 Bahrain Grand Prix.

This year, in addition to her duties at the BIC, she had a dual role for the support races happening during the race weekend – deputy COC for the Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East and chief communications for F2.

However, she was able to make time to stock up on new Lego sets, one of which she even got signed by the Ferrari duo of seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc.

“Ever since I was young, I was always fascinated by Lego but I never had the time or budget for it,” she reminisced.

“However, that changed in 2019, when my husband bought me a Lego Movie Maker set because I do stop motion videos. The set could actually help me do stop motion with Lego, and it teaches you everything.”

“He saw the set and knew



CREATIVE: Faten with part of her collection

Lego lady!



VIBRANT: One of the stunning botanical pieces



VALUABLE: The signed SF-24 F1 car that Faten added to her collection this year at the Bahrain Grand Prix



TREASURE: A Peugeot 9X8 24 Hours of Le Mans Hybrid Hypercar signed by drivers

it was perfect for me. Ever since then, I just kept on buying the sets that I wanted, like the *Friends* set, the McLaren, and it just grew.”

The first set that she worked on was a small speed champion car, which she completed in about 90 minutes.

Up next was the 2022 McLaren F1 car, which took her about 10 hours.

What started as a casual

interest quickly transformed into a serious collection, with Faten now boasting an impressive collection spanning diverse themes, from F1 racing sets to botanical collections featuring delicate roses and tulips.

“When I’m building these sets, I can meditate with no thoughts at all,” she explained. “It just clears the mind. That’s what I like. I

like to sit and clear my mind out of everything from life. That’s why I enjoy building it. It’s like my yoga session with building Legos.”

Her most challenging build to date was the Ferrari Daytona set, a 24-hour project she completed just a few days before giving birth – something that didn’t even hold her F1 organising ambitions, as she served as the COC last year while

pregnant.

A veteran marshal since 2005, Faten has been a pivotal figure in Bahrain’s racing community.

Last year, she made history by becoming the first female Clerk of the Course for Formula Three – a remarkable achievement she accomplished while eight months pregnant.

Her collection reflects her motorsports passion, with

numerous F1 and racing-themed Lego sets taking pride of place in her home.

She even treasures a small piece of carbon fiber from an F2 wing – a memento from her early marshalling days.

“I’ve always been passionate about motorsports,” Amin explains.

“From watching NASCAR as a child to marshalling at local races, it’s been a lifelong love.”

Time Out



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crossword break

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8								9				
10					11							
			12									
		13					14					
						15						
16									17	18		
									19			
20								21				
22										23		

Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

- Unsuitable (5)
- Lurch (7)
- Visionary (7)
- Spectacle (5)
- Destiny (4)
- Dislike (8)
- Hypocrisy (4)
- Anxiety (4)
- Produce (8)
- Brink (4)
- Intellect (5)
- Outstanding (7)
- Limit (7)
- Squeeze (5)

DOWN

- Tireless (13)
- Proficient (5)
- Domesticated (4)
- Contend (6)
- Against the current (8)
- Delude (7)
- Wide range (13)
- Charm (8)
- Touch (7)
- Blow (6)
- Elude (5)
- Cry (4)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... rode the 2005 Cheltenham Gold Cup-winning horse Kicking King?

WHAT ... territory other than Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory is an administrative division of Canada?

WHERE ... in England was the first Garden City founded in 1903?

WHEN ... did Queen Victoria become the first sovereign to take up residence in Buckingham Palace?

WHO ... won the 2005 Malaysian Grand Prix?

WHAT ... was the population of Monaco estimated to be in July, 2004 ... 27,023, 32,270 or 72,320?

WHERE ... in Europe is the Hoyerstrett the Supreme Court?

WHEN ... was *Whitaker's Almanack* first published?

just so

> or <

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2

my not sehcn163

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

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 3 Objective; 8 Idle; 9 Dastardly; 10 Packet; 11 Cruel; 14 Range; 15 Tare; 16 Raise; 18 Toss; 20 Loose; 21 Scamp; 24 Depict; 25 Demeanour; 26 Turn; 27 Miserable.

Down: 1 Disparity; 2 Slackness; 4 Beat; 5 Enter; 6 Target; 7 Vile; 9 Deter; 11 Crisp; 12 Laborious; 13 Repentant; 17 Elder; 19 Scheme; 22 Mania; 23 Peri; 24 Dull.

JUST SO: Day in day out, Headquarters, It's tough at the top, Merry go round.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN: Charlie Higson; Apple; Vladivostok; 2002; Tessa Jowell; Black; Dorset; 1978.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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

Your work pad space ...