

IT'S OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY!

FORMER Bahrain resident and publisher Robin Barratt's new book focusing on mental health is set to hit the shelves next month, following mental health awareness month in May, and features entries from 32 countries including the kingdom.

Anxiety and Depression is the seventh in a series of books he has compiled and published on the subject.

The others include *Suicide* – volumes one and two, *Addiction* and *Mental Health* – volumes one, two and three.

The latest 250-page book anthologises a collection of interviews, personal stories, poetry and short prose from around the world.

"I am still currently in the process of compiling it and have received almost 100 submissions. It is due for release mid-June, but with a submission deadline of May 31," the 62-year-old Briton told *GulfWeekly*.

"It will be available as a paperback and in Kindle format on *Amazon* worldwide or directly from me in the UK," the former security industry specialist, who currently lives in Norwich, added.

Being on the autistic spectrum, Robin has had many mental health challenges throughout his life, which is why the theme of the book holds importance to him.

"I have been promoting positive mental health and mental health awareness for much of my life, and have taken a number of courses with organisations including the Red Cross. In 2020, I formed Poetry for Mental Health (www.poetryformentalhealth.org), which is now the biggest organisation of its kind, supporting thousands of people around the world through words and poetry," the former Hoorra resident said.

Visual artist and poet Anju Kapoor from Manama, who has been living in the kingdom with her family for the last 30 years, has shared her verses for the book, bringing alive a personal



BOOK REPORT

By MELISSA NAZARETH
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emotional journey.

"*Excavating the Wound* emerged at a time of deep personal introspection when a gamut of my feelings, grief and resilience met, as a result of which I found it necessary to process a silent grief," the 54-year-old creative talent, who resorts to writing as a 'coping mechanism' to process her feelings, said.

An excerpt from her poem reads:

*I want the solace of unclenched fists,
the freedom of a sky unchained, unbound
I want to find myself
in the wreckage of old bruises*

Robin too finds books, words and poetry to be 'therapeutic and cathartic' in difficult times, and he tries to help others cope by motivating and inspiring them to write, and then publishing their words and work.

The founder of the Bahrain Writers' Circle (BWC), who has released more than 60 titles so far, said, "The BWC proved crucial in my writing, as prior to this I was just writing within the true crime genre, but after forming the Circle, and compiling *My Beautiful Bahrain* (2012), I moved away from true crime into compiling and publishing anthologies," he added.

The author is hopeful of moving back to live in Bahrain and believes there is a lot that the kingdom can do to develop awareness about mental health.

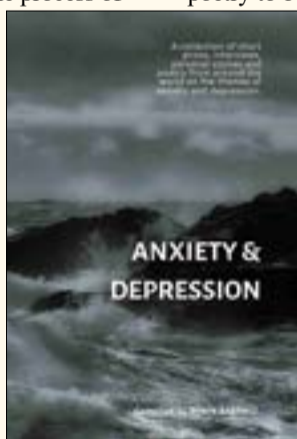
"Not many companies offer mental health awareness

and support programmes to their employees and I am not aware of any corporate mental health awareness training on the island.

"So, my goal for 2025 is to somehow find a way of introducing this aspect of wellness and self-care to the kingdom," he revealed.

To submit your entry or for more information, follow @RobinBarratt1 on Instagram.

● *GulfWeekly* readers share their experience of the 'digital detox challenge' on Page 7



SOMBRE: The book's cover



CREATIVE: Anju



BLAST FROM THE PAST: Robin at Bahrain Fort in 2010



JUNIOR SUPERSTAR
International honour
SEE PAGE 2



ART TO BEHOLD
Cultural showcase
SEE PAGE 3



LA LA LEISURE
Eat, play, repeat
SEE PAGES 4-5



PULSE OF POP
Movies, TV & more
SEE PAGE 6

Tot in tune



WONDER BOY:
Brent playing at the
American
Protégé competition

BAHRAIN-BASED Filipino expatriate couple Aileen and Brian Amado never imagined that a chance decision to enrol their son Brent for music classes during the Covid-19 pandemic would lead to him serenading an international audience someday, writes Melissa Nazareth.

The 10-year-old creative talent, who attends the Sacred Heart School Bahrain, has now been recognised for his musical achievements, alongside 100 other young achievers from diverse fields, across 130 countries worldwide.

Global Child Prodigy Awards 2025, a world-renowned platform celebrating the brightest young talents from across the globe, will honour the children in a ceremony on June 26 at the Member's Dining Room in the House of Commons, British Parliament, the UK.

"We're proud of Brent's achievement and his dedication toward music," Aileen told *GulfWeekly*.

"During the pandemic, we couldn't go out. We decided to enrol Brent for music lessons, so he would have some activity to keep him engaged. A private tutor

came home and taught him. He was just six and not really focused but his teacher observed that he was a fast learner. We were patient with him and let him learn at his pace. Eventually, he started liking it and hasn't looked back since."

Last year, the multi-talented

prodigy who also enjoys chess, swimming, art and Taekwondo, enthralled the audience at the prestigious Carnegie Hall in New York after winning third place at the American Protégé competition.

Brent's past awards include a bronze medal at the World Classical Music Awards (2022), a gold and bronze at the Gulf Musician Idol in 2022 and 2023 respectively, and a bronze and silver at the London Young Musician in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

"We started receiving invitations to enter international competitions and decided to apply," Aileen revealed, and the rest, as they say, is history.

When Brent is not tickling the ivories, he is busy hitting the keys on his keyboard, playing Minecraft, or pursuing other hobbies.

"We want him to experience each discipline and then later on, he can do what he really wants," Brian, who works with a luxury retail house, added.



VERSATILE:
Taekwondo
blue-belt
fighter Brent



UNVEILED: *Manba'a Al-Jood* book cover

All good things

BAHRAINI author Nada Fardan's latest children's book has hit the shelves this month, highlighting the idea that something good can only be built on strong, noble foundations, writes Melissa Nazareth.

The 25-page Arabic story *Manba'a Al-Jood* ('source of bounty') was unveiled at the Sharjah Children's Reading Festival, staged at Sharjah Institute for Heritage, from April 23 to May 4.

The cultural event featured workshops, interactive shows, and renowned authors, among other activities, inspiring children and developing their love for reading.

"*Manba'a Al-Jood* (available on www.alnadaworkshops.com) tells the story of a young farmer who rests beneath the shade of a large tree after a long, tiring day, and as he begins to admire the leaves for the comfort they provide, his father – an old and wise man – initiates a conversation to teach him an important lesson," the 39-year-old told *GulfWeekly*.

"This tree would never have grown so strong and beautiful if it hadn't come from a good seed. Their philosophical exchange reflects the idea that all good things must have strong, virtuous origins," she added.

Coinciding with the book release, the Sanad resident won the Jury Prize for her 2023 release *Shampoo Al-shoor Al-ajeeb* ('the amazing shampoo of feelings') at the seventh



JOURNEY: Nada with her latest titles at the festival

edition of the Sharjah Gulf Women Creativity Awards.

Other titles by the architect-turned-full-time-author include *Faris wa drou'oh Al-asher* ('Faris and his 10 Armours'), *Faris fi zaman Al-goos* ('Faris in the Pearling Age'), *Ebtisamet Shamoosa* ('Sunny Smile'), *Hamama Nodi* ('Nodi the dove') and, recently, her first English story *One Trunk Away*.

"I keep my imagination alive – vivid and attuned to what children need in order to grow," she explained, describing her creative process and how she thinks of ideas for her books.

"Writing for children is a beautiful journey. Often, I feel like a cloud laden with rain, burdened by thoughts and words that must pour forth as stories before I can find peace once more."

Bridging the Gulf



ART REPORT

By NAMAN ARORA
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THE Bahrain Businesswomen's Society is set to launch its third annual art exhibition today, May 22, at the Safeya Ali Kanoo Hub, under the patronage of National Arts Council member Shaikha Dwa bint Khalid Al Khalifa, bringing together works by 12 Bahraini artists and four guest artists from Kuwait.

The showcase, titled *Wasl*, which means 'connection' in Arabic, explores artistic and cultural ties across the Gulf, highlighting women's creativity, regional heritage, and innovation in visual storytelling.

"This exhibition is a great opportunity to showcase the talents of our members and promote the value of art and culture," the society's board member and economic and cultural committee head Manar Sirriyeh told *GulfWeekly*.

"In its third edition, *Wasl* features a total of 16 artists whose work celebrates intellectual innovation and creative exchange.

"It's a powerful step in strengthening Bahrain's cultural identity."

Participating Bahraini artists include Amina Hasan, Aysha Akbari, Fatemah Al Dilawer, Safeya Kanoo, Nawal Al Sabbagh, Salwa Al Moayyed,



LOVE OF A WOMAN: One of Amira's pieces



Amira



Manar



Rand

Noor Al Sairafi, Latifa Al Shaikh, Fareeda Bader, Rand Alkishtaini, Waheeda Al Doy, and Badriya Abdulrahman.

They are joined by Kuwaiti artists Amira Ashkanani, Ibtesam Alosfour, Dr

Jamila Salem, and Dr Abeer Alkandari.

Amina, a member of the Society and contributing artist, is showcasing two paintings: *The Peacock*, symbolising elegance and inner strength, and a piece depicting a traditional Bahraini folk dance.

"Art is a personal journey of discovery and expression," she added. "In this exhibition, I present two artworks that are close to my heart."

Meanwhile, Rand's contributions include functional art pieces – handmade palm straw table

lamps – and a vibrant, playful painting highlighting the regional symbol of the palm tree.

"My pieces in the exhibition explore the theme of connection through both functionality and cultural symbolism," she added.

"The Tala table lamps are designed with a sustainable approach, using natural palm straw to highlight the artistic idea behind the small palm tree, called 'Tala' in Arabic.

"This piece connects nature, tradition, and modern design, emphasising how sustainable materials can foster a deeper bond with our environment.

"The painting reflects a joyful, childish style with



CULTURE: One of Badriya's pieces

vibrant colours that evoke energy and positivity.

"The palm tree, a familiar plant in our region, symbolises growth and resilience, further reinforcing the idea of connection to nature, community, and cultural roots.

Noor's work, from her *Chromaflora* series, uses flowers as metaphors for memory and identity.

From Kuwait, Amira brings two paintings under the title *Love of a Woman*, drawing on themes of beauty and femininity through decorative and abstract styles. "I always draw inspiration

for my artwork from women and their interests in beauty, colour, and symbolic expression," said Amira, a veteran artist and former art education supervisor in Kuwait's Education Ministry.

"*Wasl* is a beautiful opportunity to share my work in a regional context and connect with fellow artists."

Organisers say the event represents a growing commitment to supporting female artists and fostering a thriving arts scene in Bahrain.

"Our society believes in the power of culture and creativity to inspire and empower," said the society's president Dr Fatima Al Kooheji.

With themes ranging from tradition and heritage to identity, sustainability, and abstraction, the exhibition is a vibrant testament to the artistic links being formed across the Gulf.

It welcomes visitors of all ages to experience this celebration of regional creativity and women's voices in art.

The exhibition will be inaugurated today at noon and run daily from 9am to 9pm until May 28.



THE PEACOCK: A painting by Amina



ICON: Latifa's pieces draw inspiration from late Egyptian singing sensation Umm Kulthoom, allowing visitors to reflect on the collective memory and reverence for her legacy



TALA: Functional palm tree-inspired lamps by Rand

Leisure Scene

What's on guide by
Jayne Houghton



STEAK-TACULAR EVENINGS AT RITZ

VISIT The Ritz-Carlton Bahrain and indulge in the ultimate carnivore's fantasy at Plums, with Tomahawk Tuesdays featuring a perfectly grilled Angus tomahawk steak paired with a premium bottle of grape.

This luxurious dining affair promises to elevate your evening with exquisite flavours and an elegant ambience, creating an unforgettable culinary experience. Held every Tuesday from 7pm to 11pm, the feast is priced at BD69.

● Embrace the festive spirit at Cantina Kahlo's Saturday Brunch Fiesta, where bold Mexican flavours come alive in authentic dishes while a lively mariachi band sets the perfect soundtrack for the weekend. It's available every Saturday, from 1pm to 4pm and is priced at BD25 with soft beverages and BD35 with selected beverages.

● Experience a truly unique indulgence with Croissant A La Grande at The Ritz Gourmet



INDULGENCE: Bahrain's only 1kg croissant

Lounge, featuring Bahrain's only 1kg croissant paired with two hot beverages and a selection of delectable spreads. Perfect for sharing among six to eight people, this extraordinary pastry creation requires 24-hour advance ordering. Available daily from 8am to 10pm at BD35.

● Discover the essence of Italy with a modern twist at Primavera, where gourmet pizzas, handcrafted pastas, fresh seafood, and rich risottos showcase the finest seasonal, local ingredients.

Complete your culinary journey with the signature Tiramisu Trolley for a memorable sweet finale. Open Wednesday through Monday, lunch is served from 12.30pm to 3pm and dinner from 7pm to 11pm, with à la carte pricing.

● Embark on a culinary adventure at Thai Lounge with exclusive signature creations by MasterChef champion Chef Dan Lee. Each meticulously crafted dish represents the perfect harmony of bold, vibrant flavours and refined technique, showcasing the chef's award-winning expertise and passion for authentic Southeast Asian cuisine. Available daily from 1pm to 10pm.

For all reservations, call 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com.

RAISING THE
STEAKS: Tomahawk
at the Ritz



BRUNCH 'N' MUNCH AT FOUR SEASONS

FOUR Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is inviting guests to indulge in curated culinary experiences this month.

Whether you're drawn to the vibrant tastes of Latin America, the refined charm of afternoon tea, or the relaxed tradition of Aperitivo, the offerings at Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay promise something for every palate.

● Every Friday throughout this month, Bahrain Bay Kitchen comes alive with the rhythm and soul of Latin America from 1pm to 4pm.

The much-loved Latin American Brunch offers a festive feast for families and friends. Start your culinary adventure with colourful starters like Beef Salpicon, a Three Bean Salad tossed in chipotle dressing, and the restaurant's signature Mexican Salad.

The live ceviche station tempts with fresh Leche de Tigre and Nikkei-style creations, while the barbecue corner sizzles with Red Snapper Veracruz, Buffalo Chicken Wings, and Dry Ancho Chilli Braised Short Ribs.

The feast continues with handcrafted tacos, empanadas and enchiladas, served with all the traditional fixings. End your meal on a sweet note with indulgent Latin desserts like Flan de Queso, Tres Leches and classic Churros.

As live Latin music fills the air, children are treated

to their own buffet, face painting, piñata fun, and weekly entertainment such as treasure hunts and balloon artists.

The brunch is priced at BD35 with soft beverages and BD48 with a selected beverage package.

Children under six dine for free whereas those aged between six and 12 enjoy a 50 per cent discount.

● For a more tranquil escape, the Blossom Afternoon Tea at Bay View Lounge offers a luxurious

retreat every day from noon to 9pm. Overlooking the shimmering waters of Bahrain Bay, this experience elevates the traditional afternoon tea with refined flavours and artful presentation.

Begin with savoury delights such as lemon saffron prawns with mint, stuffed zucchini flower with salmon and avocado, and bresaola with cream cheese and fig jam.

The sweet selection includes an airy Japanese cheesecake with kumquat marmalade,

a matcha and Madagascar vanilla choux, and a Guanaja dark chocolate and yuzu tart. Freshly baked scones with clotted cream and artisanal jams complete the offering.

Guests can choose from an array of premium Jing teas or opt for the Royal Afternoon Tea, which includes a refreshing mocktail to complement the flavours.

Priced at BD22 including Jing Tea and the Royal option is priced at BD26 with mocktails.

● Those looking to unwind

in a more laid-back setting can embrace the Italian tradition of Aperitivo. Available daily from 11am to 11.30pm until the end of May, this à la carte

experience features artisanal sharing boards with curated selections of Italy's finest cheeses and cured meats – perfect for pairing with a refreshing beverage as you relax in the ambience of Bay View Lounge.

For more information, or reservations, contact 17115500 or 17115044.



FIESTA: Latin American Brunch at Four Seasons

SHERATON Bahrain Hotel has expanded its culinary offerings with the recent opening of **Brasero Atlántico**, a vibrant rooftop lounge and restaurant bringing the essence of Argentina to Manama.

Discover the Buenos Aires soul through wood-fired meats, handcrafted drinks, and vinyl music, all on the hotel's rooftop.

Located on the R Floor of Sheraton Bahrain Hotel, the lounge is open daily from 4pm to 2am, while the restaurant serves dinner from 7pm to 11pm.

Brasero Atlántico reservations can be made by calling 17517715 or WhatsApp 38885482.

● The hotel's popular WILD Brunch invites guests to start their weekend with bold flavours and high energy. Enjoy premium shareable plates, muddled drinks and live entertainment. Available every Friday from 12.30pm to 5pm the brunch offers several packages: soft drinks at BD36, premium drinks at BD46, and premium free flow bubbles at BD186.

For weekday diners, WILD also offers a daily three-course Business Lunch featuring a rotating menu inspired by global cuisines from Spanish to Asian, British, Italian, and Peruvian. Available Sunday through Thursday from noon to 3pm, it's priced at BD10.500 and includes homemade iced tea.

Leisure Scene

Weekly Entertainment



STUNNING: The
ambience at Braseró
Atlántico



TASTE THE BEST OF ARGENTINA

● Golestan Persian Grill continues to delight guests with authentic Persian flavours. From signature kebabs to traditional specialties, the restaurant offers a modern Persian dining experience. Golestan

is open daily for lunch from noon to 3pm and dinner from 7pm to 11pm with extended weekend hours from noon to 4pm and 7pm to 11pm.

For reservations, call 17533533 or reach out via WhatsApp at 38885409.

INTERCONTINENTAL Bahrain is offering a selection of delicious dining options throughout this month.

A refined Friday brunch affair at Legendz SteakHouse brings together elevated buffet stations, à la carte mains and vibrant live entertainment for a relaxed yet sophisticated dining experience.

Guests can indulge in curated starters, gourmet sausages, truffle burrata, fresh seafood and more from live stations. Mains are plated to perfection with luxe ingredients such as truffle, caviar and foie gras. The dessert selection dazzles with elegant pastries, tarts, and molecular elements, with signature concoctions. Alona's smooth live vocals and upbeat DJ sets set the tone for a lively afternoon. Available every Friday from 12pm to 4pm. Priced at BD28net including soft beverages or BD38net with unlimited selected spirits. Children under six dine for free and those aged six to 12 enjoy 50 per cent off.

Steak lovers can double their delight every Monday at Legendz SteakHouse with the 'Two for One Steak' offer. Buy one steak and receive

another of equal or lesser value absolutely free. This sizzling promotion runs from 6pm to 11pm, perfect for a flavoursome start to the week.

● Seafood Night makes waves at Selections every Thursday evening with 'The Hook' at the Regency Tent. From 6.30pm to 10.30pm, dive into interactive live stations and signature dishes, including the catch of the day grilled fresh and served with infused butter sauces.

Sip on ocean-inspired muddled drinks for the ultimate under-the-sea escape. Packages are priced at BD24net with soft beverages and BD32net with endless house drinks.

● Elevate the day at Elements with 'Your Floating Happiness' – a luxurious breakfast for two served poolside in the heart of Manama. Available daily from 9am to noon, this serene experience is ideal for a romantic celebration or indulgent start to the day. Priced at BD19net for two guests.

For more information, contact 36967701.

CURRY NIGHT AT DILMUN

THE Dilmun Club, located in Saar, hosts a variety of themed dining nights, open to both members and the general public.

A crowd favourite is Curry Night, taking place every Monday between noon and 10pm, where guests can savour a hearty curry dish paired with a selected

beverage for just BD5.500.

Midweek brings Steak Night on Wednesdays from 6pm to 10pm – a great option for couples or friends, featuring two steaks and a bottle of grape for BD20.

Non-members are welcome to join these themed evenings by contacting the reception at 17690926.



THE British Club will once again host the Jazz Orchestra of Bahrain for a special evening of live music by the poolside tonight, May 22, from 8pm.

Back by popular demand, the Jazz Orchestra of Bahrain is set to deliver another captivating performance, offering guests an unforgettable night of smooth and soulful jazz

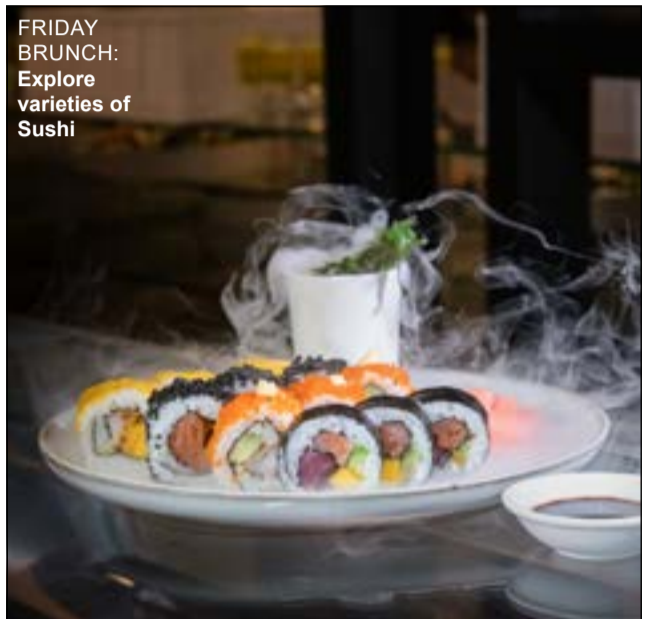
under the stars. The event is free for members, while non-members can attend for just BD1.

Music lovers and jazz enthusiasts are encouraged to attend and enjoy the atmosphere at one of Bahrain's most iconic venues.

For details, contact reception@britishclubbahrain.com or call 17728245.

PERFECTION ON A PLATE

FRIDAY
BRUNCH:
Explore
varieties of
Sushi



SWEETIES: An artistic creation
at the Friday brunch



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) What was the name of Guns N' Roses' debut album?
- 2) Which tennis Grand Slam is played on a clay surface?
- 3) Which country is the world's top producer of black pepper?
- 4) In (the game) Travel Pursuit, what colour represents the category 'Science & Nature'?
- 5) Which movie holds the record for the most cars destroyed in a single movie?
- 6) Brown, spiny, Norway and black are all



examples of which kind of animal?
7) On the national flag of which African country is the 'Eagle of Saladin' depicted?

ANSWERS
1. Appetite for Destruction
2. The French Open
3. Vietnam
4. Green
5. Transformers: Dark Side of the Moon
6. Rat
7. Egypt

Pulse of Pop

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

ACTION:
The film's
cast



MISSION ENTITY

ACTION spy film *Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning* is out now in theatres.

Starring Tom Cruise, the film follows Ethan Hunt, an agent of the Impossible Mission Force (IMF) who puts up a fight with an artificial intelligence (AI) enemy called 'The Entity', which has infiltrated intelligence networks all over the globe and is a major threat to the world's governments.

Directed by Christopher McQuarrie, the film is set to be a sequel to *Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning* and the overall eighth in the franchise.

The director said that the earliest conversations about the film, the production of which was wrapped up in 2024, began years earlier, when artificial intelligence was not as commonly



DARING: A scene from the film

discussed by the masses, and the crew wanted to think of a new threat not explored in previous instalments.

"We've done nuclear threats, we've done chemical threats, biological threats. In trying to keep it fresh, we were looking outward, and the big conversation I had with Tom (Cruise) very early on was about technology, information technology, and what, now, everyone is talking about is

AI," Christopher said.

"Two or three years ago, this idea would have been too intellectual for most people. We would have been explaining too much of what it was and what I count on from the audience.

"I felt, in the zeitgeist, this anxiety about technology and how technology was beginning to influence our lives, and how we take that anxiety that the audience is

bringing to the movie and give them a release? That's really what the movie boils down to," he added.

The *Mission: Impossible* film series is based on the namesake 1966 TV series created by Bruce Geller, and the films have been directed, written and scored by a variety of filmmakers and crew, while also incorporating the original musical themes from the show.

Throughout the years, the film franchise has been received generally positively by critics and audience, and is the 17th highest grossing production of all time. It got its first Academy Award nomination last year, with *Dead Reckoning* being shortlisted for best visual effects and best sound.

With an estimated budget of \$300 to 400 million, the new addition is one of the most expensive films ever made.

WINNING HEARTS

H EART Lamp: *Selected Stories* by Indian activist, lawyer and writer Banu Mushtaq has bagged this year's International Booker Prize.

Translated by Deepa Bhashti, the 12 stories written between 1990 and 2023 tackle the everyday lives of women and girls in Muslim communities in southern India, shedding light on a variety of themes, including class divide, cultural disconnection and generational trauma, in a manner that is witty and humorous, yet moving and excoriating.

"My stories are about women, how society demands unquestioning obedience from them, and in doing so, inflicts inhumane cruelty upon



them, turning them into mere subordinates," Banu said.

Released last month, *Heart Lamp* is the first short story collection and the first Kannada language translation to win the prize.

Deepa explained that her approach to translating the book was not to turn the language into proper English, but rather to introduce the reader to new words.

"I call it translating with an accent," she said.

BROTHERS:
Russel, left,
and Ron



MAKING A POINT

A MERICAN art pop duo Sparks' 26th studio album, *MAD!*, releases tomorrow.

The new body of work by the two brothers is set to examine cultural phenomena and current significant events in a satirical manner, including performative devotion to someone, whether it's a lover, celebrity or a sports team, and the rise of influencers, while also retaining enough ambiguity for the listener to fill in the blanks.

Sonically, the 12 tracks are expected to feature nods to new wave, synthpop and electronic opera - genres that Sparks have pioneered throughout their career.

The duo said the album title perfectly describes their legacy, as well as the events discussed in the lyrics.

"It feels appropriate, specifically for this album and also because we've often been described as mad, in both connotations of the word: crazy and angry. *MAD!* fits that description," Russell Mael said.

"And also for these times, when everything feels like it's completely out of control and the world is mad in all meanings of the word.

"There were long Sparks board meetings about: 'Do we really need that exclamation mark in the title?' We decided it's absolutely needed, to ram home the point," he added.

Formed in 1971, the musical act are known for their quirky approach to song-writing, which sometimes contains literary or cinematic references, and a distinctive theatrical stage presence.

'LOST' DUO REUNITES FOR CRIME THRILLER

THE first two episodes of crime thriller series *Duster* are out now on OSN+, with a weekly release planned until July 3.

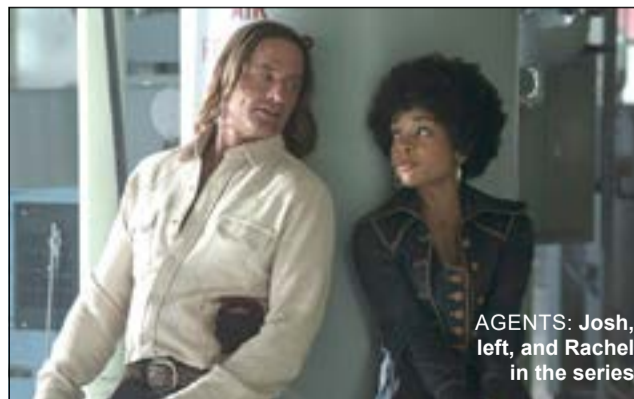
Set in the 1972 southwestern United States, the *HBO Max* show follows the FBI's first black woman agent Nina Hayes (Rachel Hilson) as she is working to stop a crime with the assistance of gateway driver Jim Ellis (Josh Holloway).

The show marks Josh's return to television since his role as Roarke Morris

in the 2020-2021 American neo-western drama show *Yellowstone*, as well as the actor's reunion with show creator J J Abrams. Josh worked with Abrams on the popular science fiction adventure series *Lost* (2004-2010) where he famously portrayed the protagonist James 'Sawyer' Ford.

In an interview, Josh compared working with the writer and director to 'putting on your favourite pair of jeans'.

"J J called me out of nowhere," Josh recalled. "I was sitting on the couch with



AGENTS: Josh, left, and Rachel in the series

my wife going, 'When am I ever going to work again? What is going on in this industry?' And then boom, phone call, and J J said,

"You got a minute?" And he proceeded to pitch me this idea for this show and I was blown away immediately," he added.

Readers across the kingdom participate in **GulfWeekly's digital detox challenge**, in honour of Mental Health Awareness Month in May, documenting their experience 'switching off' for 24 hours - no screens, no social media!

Freedom from gadgets

SPEAK YOUR MIND!

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!

FOR someone who has spent most of her life working in the media, the constant news barrage took its toll on my health.

So, many years ago, I decided to spend one precious day a week without using my mobile, a digital detox for my sanity.

I deliberately shut out the world, silencing

notifications from my mobile and embracing the quiet.

Twenty-five years of this practice has given me immense joy, peace and stability.

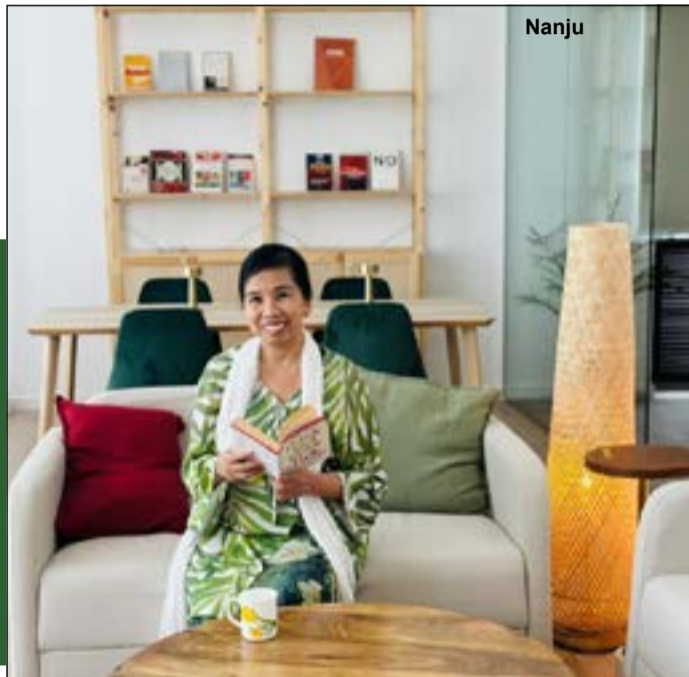
People always tell me that I look happy and younger than my age!

Going offline has also taught me patience and endurance, making me a better person, ready

for any challenges that life has to offer. I continue to 'detox' to this day, especially during weekends. The irony of it - I am happiest whenever I am not touching my mobile.

Prioritising my mental health above all is the best decision I've ever made in my life.

- Nanju Francisco, 59, Filipino media specialist



Nanju



WITH NATURE: Parul, right, with Parth

THE digital detox challenge is something I do regularly.

I often take time away from gadgets. Even on a daily basis, I have set a time limit after which phone usage is only to attend to important calls. Instead of spending hours scrolling, I love to read and write.

For news updates, I prefer to listen to the radio or read the newspaper. Going for regular evening walks with my son Parth is a must, which gives us time to connect with nature, observing

the sunset and sunrise, listening to chirping birds from dawn to dusk - it uplifts me. And, I never carry the phone.

Meditating on a regular basis also helps me distract myself from screens.

I am happy, calm and relaxed when I step away from my device. I have observed that I don't crave screentime and continue to pursue my hobbies and have meaningful interactions with loved ones.

- Parul Sharma, 40, Indian homemaker and part-time teacher

LIVING a day without the phone? Unthinkable, right?

Trust me, it is both liberating and refreshing. Ironically, I attempted this a few weeks ago and felt refreshed albeit just for a day but it was worth it. Jumped out of bed, resisted the urge to 'Wordle', instead dived into the newspaper with my cuppa. The GDN it was!

Then hopped on my bicycle for a long ride into oblivion; soaked in nature, listened to the many tunes of happy birds and got doused with a spray of water from a garden sprinkler, gone wild. Liberating!



Sheela

Withdrawal symptoms sans phone? Sure! Not checking it constantly for updates on social media made me calmer and Zen-like as I immersed myself in other hobbies.

As the day progressed, I got restive and called friends I had not seen in a while on my landline. Sadly, a gadget meant to connect us is losing its flavour as it slowly disconnects us from the real world and real people. No thanks to social media, the 'digital drug' that's getting us hooked.

I plan to make phone-free days a habit rather than a one-off challenge.

- Sheela Pai, 63, retired Indian banker

GDN and GulfWeekly reporter Nader Adnan also accepted the challenge! Here's what he had to say.

GOING into this challenge. I avoided all screen time, except occasionally checking my phone for urgent or work-related messages. I avoided social media in its

entirety, and learned very quickly that I did not miss it.

It was refreshing going through the day without negativity or doom scrolling. Instead, I went through my camera – photography is one of my hobbies – and discovered a couple of new settings and features I've never seen before!

I like going for walks and usually do so with headphones. No screen time however meant no music, and it felt weird walking around the neighbourhood without songs in my ears. I ended up actually observing my surroundings

more mindfully.

I realised that other than a couple of instances here and there, I did not really miss my phone that much, although it did feel weird paying for something in cash instead of BenefitPay!

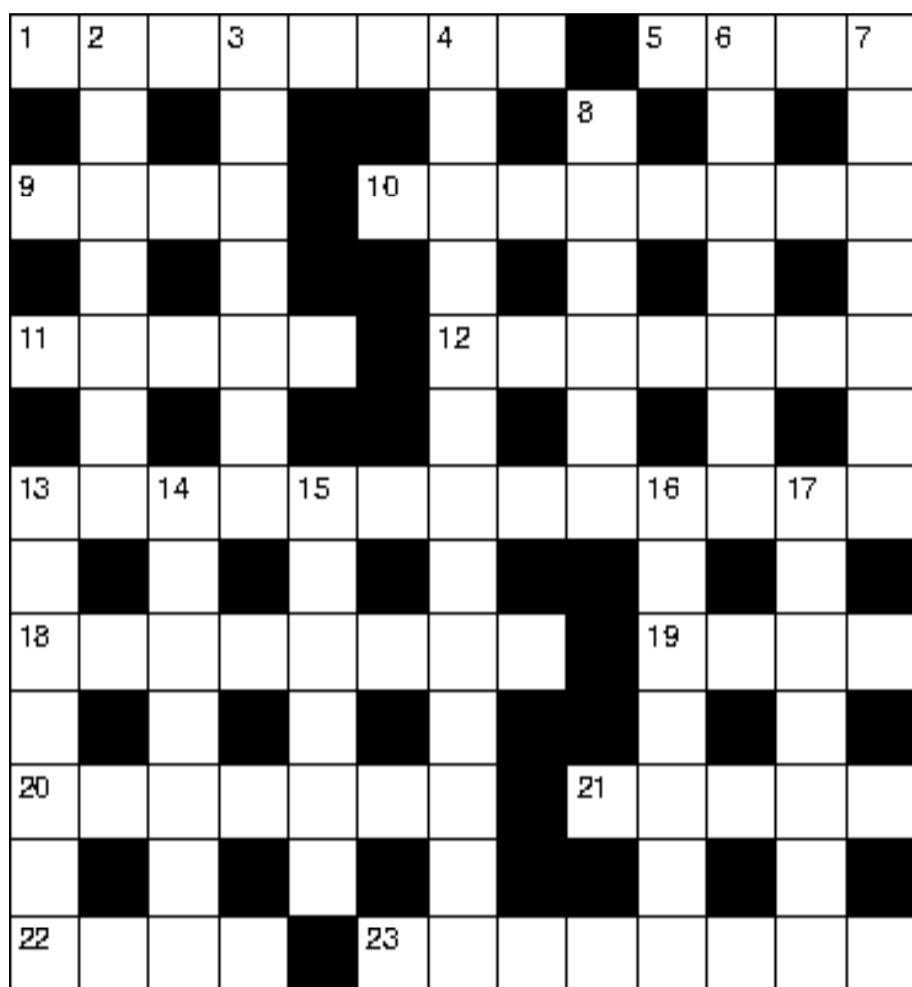


Time Out



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crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Equip (8)
5. Suspend (4)
9. Bother (4)
10. Drinking-bout (8)
11. Journal (5)
12. Break (7)
13. Not helped (13)
18. Menace (8)
19. Squad (4)
20. Transgression (7)
21. Bet (5)
22. Cultivate (4)
23. Status (8)

DOWN

2. Wariness (7)
3. Remark (7)
4. New order (13)
6. Beating (7)
7. Balcony (7)
8. Pair (6)
13. Opening anthem (7)
14. Horrible (7)
15. Prairies (6)
16. Miser (7)
17. Lamp (7)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... was deposed as the UK's Conservative Party deputy chairman in March 2005?

WHAT ... is the currency of Egypt?

WHERE ... in Asia are the Liancourt Rocks?

WHEN ... was the Walk of Fame in Hollywood installed?

WHO ... wrote the novels *Affinity* and *Tipping the Velvet*?

WHAT ... horse won the Dubai World Cup in 2006?

WHERE ... did the artist Rembrandt die in 1669?

WHEN ... was England's Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts opened?

just so

THE &f

sCARLET

sound

er er = @

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

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 7 Amazed; 8 Madden; 10 Sharpen; 11 Nerve; 12 Vole; 13 Greed; 17 Torso; 18 Fete; 22 Tacit; 23 Outcast; 24 Fettle; 25 Teaser.

Down: 1 Massive; 2 Manacle; 3 Tempt; 4 Saunter; 5 Adore; 6 Under; 9 Intrusion; 14 Hostile; 15 Because; 16 Vesture; 19 Staff; 20 Acute; 21 Steer.

JUST SO: Open sesame, Sign of the times, Split hairs, The five senses.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN: Jake Arnott; Auckland; Madrid; 1969; Oxford; Granny Smith; Finland; 1976.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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

Your work pad space ...