

Picture purrfect!



TRIO: One of Heidee's favourite creations inspired by her relationship with her siblings

ART REPORT
By MELISSA NAZARETH
melissa@gdnmedia.bh

CATS are emerging as the 'meow'se of choice, inspiring many artists in Bahrain and posing the question: why do felines continue to claw their way into our paintings, literature and culture, coinciding with International Cat Day tomorrow.

Whether it is Lewis Carol's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), Japanese author Syou Ishida's *We'll Prescribe You a Cat* (2024), French Art Nouveau painter Théophile Steinlen's iconic *Le Chat Noir* (the black cat) poster (1896), or Freddie Mercury's musical tribute *Delilah* (1991) to his favourite namesake companion, cats have been an integral part of the art that we have been consuming for centuries.

Even in Bahraini culture, these critters often appear in old tales, according to comic artist and illustrator from Muharraq Zainab Almahdi.

"Cats often appear in Bahraini and regional folklore as vessels for jinn and other spirits," the 27-year-old told *GulfWeekly*.

"In my art, cats feature either as the main subjects, or I hide them in different parts of my work," added the creative talent, who draws both regular and anthropomorphic cats.

"They are flexible, animated and silly, lend themselves



FURRY AND FLORAL: A piece by Heidee for an exhibition in Bahrain last year

to cartoon illustration, and automatically bring a sense of whimsy to any art piece. You can use cats to reframe ordinary scenes in art. For example, if I dress up a cat in traditional dress, suddenly



MAN AND BEAST: *Rajul Al Qut* by Ebrahim Busaad



PAIR OF PURRS: Zainab's latest creation of anthropomorphic felines

the readers start paying attention to the piece, and, in turn, the message I am trying to convey," explained the GDN reporter.

Filipino expatriate and artist Heidee Gragas-Galas from Juffair enjoys bringing cats alive in her creations because they're 'cute' and they carry

a 'soft, graceful elegance' that she believes reflects a 'feminine, calming energy'.

"Cats have a soft, quiet presence that feels delicate but confident, which pairs beautifully with florals in my work," said Heidee.

Growing up, the 33-year-old had a cat at home, which helped her develop a personal connection with the animal, naturally influencing her work.

"I remember stories from my elders saying cats can sense spirits or bring luck depending on their colour," Heidee said. "In art and books, they often show up as symbols of independence, grace or even magic. That mix of the real and the mythical fascinates me and makes them timeless subjects to paint," she added.

Renowned Bahraini artist Ebrahim Busaad's popular *Sleeping Cats* exhibition in 2016 struck a chord with both art and feline enthusiasts at the time.

The striking pieces,

including *Rajul Al Qut* ('the cat man'), *Murdi'at Al Shar* ('nursur of evil') and *Al Hilm Al Azraq* ('the blue dream') continue to wow fans even today, with many vocalising their applause on the artist's Instagram posts.

In the collection, the founding member of the Bahrain Art Society brought alive the 'infidel' nature of the cat, using his distinct style of elegant lines and vibrant hues. The works also reflect the architectural elements and the decorative motifs that characterised the city of Muharraq, his hometown.

The *Sleeping Cats* paintings are based on a recurring dream Ebrahim had about his cat.

"At the age of six, my grandmother gifted me a cat. For the first time, I had a companion," the 71-year-old revealed – a sentiment that famous novelist and cat lover Charles Dickens shared, when he said, 'What greater gift than the love of a cat?'



GOLDEN LESSONS
New children's show
SEE PAGE 2



IT'S SKIN DEEP
Beauty trends
SEE PAGE 3



LEISURE SCENE
Good fun, great eats
SEE PAGES 4-5



PULSE OF POP
Music, books & more
SEE PAGE 6



KNIGHT: A visual from the book featuring Faris

Shields up!

COMMUNITY REPORT
By MELISSA NAZARETH
melissa@gdnmedia.bh

A beloved children's book written by a Bahraini author has been made into a cartoon series, and officially released this week, teaching young minds valuable lessons in gratitude, integrity, patience and more.

Faris wa drou'oh Al-asher ('Faris and his 10 shields') penned by Nada Fardan hit the shelves back in 2015, and is a collection of 10 short stories, each dedicated to a particular 'shield' or virtue.

The Sanad resident had originally submitted her work at the popular Sharjah Award for Arab Creativity and after receiving a positive feedback and praise from the jury, decided to publish it.

However, the idea for it to be adapted as an animated series *Durro'a Al-Faris* ('knight's shields') struck last year after Saudi writer Fahad Al-Qahtani reached out to Ms Fardan, and the duo worked with animation company Cartologia to bring the tales alive in a rhyme format.

Over the last year, three of the 10 episodes were created and the first episode of the series was screened at Abdulrahman Kanoo Cultural Centre in Riffa during an event. It also featured a themed competition for children, an interactive session singing the rhyme featured in the cartoon, and a book signing, among other things.

Nada emphasised that the series delivers authentic Arabic content rooted in local cultural and environmental values.



TOUCHING TALE: Visuals from the book



COMMUNITY: Nada, standing right, with some of the attendees at the launch of the cartoon series

"I'm thrilled to see that my story will now reach a wider audience," Nada told *GulfWeekly*.

"Our goal is to reinforce identity, instill a sense of belonging, and present engaging, value-driven stories that maintain the simplicity and excitement children love.

"This is a big project and we're in the process of working on the remaining episodes. The first three are available on my YouTube channel (@al-nadaworkshops)," the 39-year-old added.

The series revolves around young Faris ('knight' in Arabic), who faces life's battles with unwavering courage and resilience thanks to his shields or virtues that guide him – the Shield of Self-Confidence, which empowers Faris to believe in himself; the Shield of Cultural Difference, which celebrates diversity and understanding; and the Shield of Gratitude, fostering appreciation, among others.

According to the architect-turned-full-time-author, she always strives to write stories that can resonate

with children from diverse backgrounds and nationalities, with some of her books featuring characters with special needs, nodding to her inclusive approach.

One of her recent titles *Manba'a Al-Jood* ('source of bounty') was officially unveiled at the Sharjah Children's Reading Festival this year and highlights the idea that something good can only be built on strong, noble foundations.

Her first children's book *One Trunk Away* – the heartwarming tale of Harry, a young elephant, and his mother, who gently encourages him to face new challenges on his own – also released this year.

"We are considering having English subtitles for the animated series (*Durro'a Al-Faris*), so more children can enjoy it," Nada revealed.

Other books by the author include *Faris fi zaman Al-goos* ('Faris in the Pearling Age'), *Ebtisamet Shamoosa* ('Sunny Smile'), and *Hamama Nodi* ('Nodi the dove').

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) From which country do Dominoes originate?
- 2) This breed of dog was named after its original purpose of chasing badgers out of holes. What is it called?
- 3) The *Night Watch* by which artist was slashed at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in September 1975?
- 4) The *Book of Kells* is written in which language?
- 5) What type of flower was on the flag of France before the



- 6) In which cartoon series would you find Blossom, Bubble & Buttercup?
- 7) What type of leaf is used to make the Greek dish, Dolmades?

1. China
2. Dachshund
3. Rembrandt
4. Latin
5. Fleur-de-lis
6. The Powerpuff Girls
7. Grape leaves

ANSWERS

POP OFF THE CHARTS

SOUTH Korean singer Kim Seok-jin aka Jin of K-pop band BTS fame is bringing the finale of his solo tour to the big screen in Bahrain this Sunday, August 10.

RunSeokjin Ep Tour (stylised as #RUNSEOKJIN_EPTOUR) is the artist's first independent gig in support of his debut album *Happy* (2024) and *Echo* (2025).

The tour, which began on June 28, is set to conclude on Sunday at the Ziggo Dome in Amsterdam, Netherlands, with an exclusive live screening at VOX cinemas in Bahrain, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Lebanon.

Formed in 2010, BTS aka Bangtan Boys

consists of Suga, J-Hope, RM, Jimin, V, and Jung Kook alongside Jin.

Three years ago, the band took a break to complete their mandatory South Korean military service and pursue solo careers.

During this time, Jin officially debuted as a solo artist with the single *The Astronaut*, though he had released singles prior to the band's hiatus.



ARTSY: The concert film's poster

The recipient of a series of recognitions, including the Recording Industry Association of Japan's (RIAJ) platinum certification for *Happy* in 2024, Jin is set to make more music with the band.

In a live stream last month, the ensemble announced that they have started writing new material together, with new music set to be released next year.

Skin in the game

*Summer is a time when our skin needs that extra pampering. In addition to using a strong SPF to shield you from cancer-causing UV rays and regularly cleansing, toning and moisturising, you could add these latest skincare trends to your routine. **Melissa Nazareth** scours the 'beauty-verse' for the most popular hacks this season – from home-use LED facemasks to salmon DNA facials, AI-driven regimens and more.*

SKIN FOOD

Over-the-counter formulations rich in bioactive ingredients like exosomes, nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide and plant adaptogens are popular this season. They are believed to offer diverse benefits like skin cell regeneration, collagen production and improved texture.



AU NATUREL: Honey is a popular ingredient in skincare and possesses antibacterial and anti-inflammatory qualities

KOREAN DERMA

Korean skincare has visibly revolutionised the global beauty industry in the last few years and continues to be a staple among users globally.

After snail mucin, salmon DNA facials are the new trend. According to online reports, PDRN or polydeoxyribonucleotide, an active ingredient in the treatment, could help in skin regeneration and collagen production, and can be administered as a topical serum or injected into the skin.

SPA TREATMENTS

Massages and facials are here to stay this season, with spas across the kingdom offering treatments focused on tackling summer skin peevs.

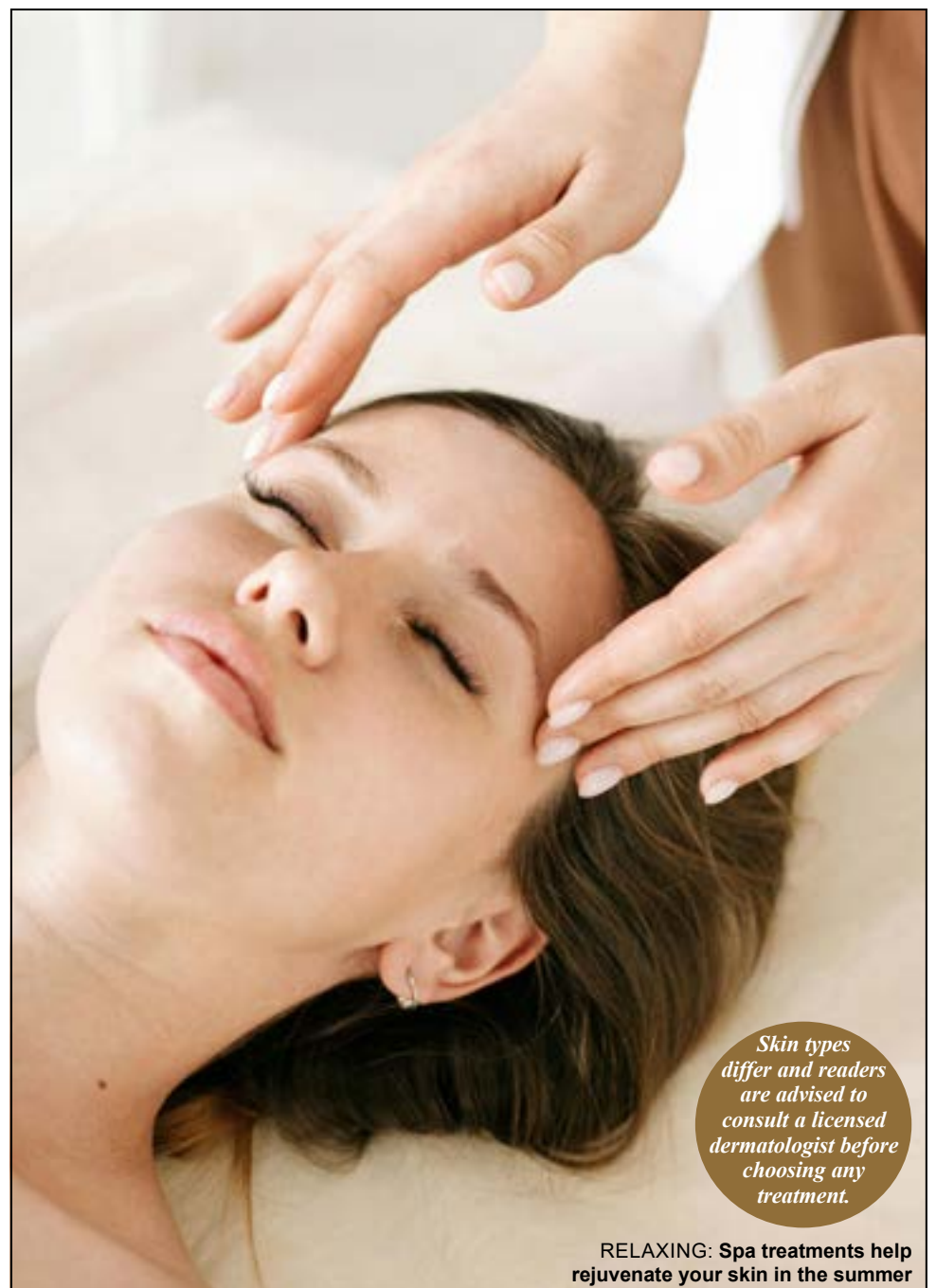
Dehydration, sunburn, oily skin, breakouts and hyperpigmentation are common in Bahrain, according to Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay senior spa director Nikolay Dimitrov, who recommends The Spa's award-winning Biologique Recherche VIP O2 Facial to hydrate and revitalise dull skin,

or the Anne Semonin Cryo Time Freeze Facial to calm sunburned skin. Biologique Recherche's Sebum Rebalancing Facial helps oil production, which is great for oily skin and breakouts.

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain offers signature treatments like the Vitality Ritual with glacier-derived ingredients and volcano powder, and the Nourished Glow and Renew and Revitalise Ritual for deep hydration, exfoliation, and renewal.

Skin types differ and readers are advised to consult a licensed dermatologist before choosing any treatment.

RELAXING: Spa treatments help rejuvenate your skin in the summer



PUT YOUR MASK ON

While LED technology has been used in skincare for many years, at-home LED masks have recently been gaining popularity, with content creators on *TikTok* waxing eloquent about the benefits of the tool. They claim that the non-invasive, easy-to-use

product would help in collagen production, lending your skin a glow, and reduce inflammation and acne, as well as boost overall blood circulation.

Being a low-level laser therapy, it is 'safe and unlikely to cause damage', according to dermatologists worldwide.

TECH-SAVVY SKINCARE

Gen Z and millennials are looking to technology, specifically artificial intelligence (AI), for a lot more than its conventional uses; mental health and skincare, among others. In response, the beauty industry has developed AI-powered apps that allow the user to upload face photos and get a skin analysis, as well as customised skincare routines and advanced solutions; virtual skincare try-ons and age-progression simulations. Many brands offer chat bot services that assist with recommendations in real time.

SKINIMALISM

Less is more – while a 10-step skincare routine was the rage some months ago, this summer, content creators are de-influencing the masses, advocating a minimalistic routine. Multifunctional products are gaining traction

as are preventive, holistic skincare regimens that offer long-term benefits, rather than knee-jerk solutions that address problems when they arise.

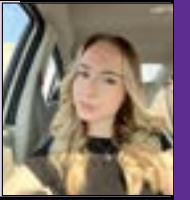
KEEPING IT TIGHT: Consumers are opting for a minimalistic skincare routine



TOOL KIT: At-home-use beauty gadgets like LED masks are gaining popularity this season

Leisure Scene

What's on guide by
Julia Cassano



RITZ BECKONS WITH FABULOUS FARE

DELIGHT in a range of irresistible offerings at the Ritz-Carlton Bahrain this week.

Turn your Mondays into a Fajita Fiesta. Savour sizzling fajitas bursting with vibrant spices, paired perfectly with two delicious beverages at Cantina Kahlo. It is available from 7pm to 10pm, at BD29.

Enjoy the simple pleasures of life with an exquisite afternoon tea experience, featuring savoury sandwiches, freshly-baked scones and signature pastries by pastry chef Alexis Beaufils. It costs BD34 per set, everyday, from 3pm to 7pm at the Ritz Gourmet Lounge.

Relish the taste of India as Nirvana celebrates the 79th Indian Independence Day on

AUTHENTIC: Nirvana celebrates Indian Independence Day with a grand feast



August 15. Experience royal flavours from noon to 3pm or 7pm to 11pm for BD24 per person.

Guests can also delight their tastebuds with a beautiful assortment of the finest macrons. Made with premium ingredients, a range of flavours are offered, including vanilla, raspberry, blueberry,

chocolate, pistachio, and more. It costs BD20 per box or BD3 per piece, everyday from 10am to 10pm at the Ritz Gourmet Shop and La Gourmandise.

Gather your friends and indulge in a massive croissant, weighing a whopping 1kg. The perfect treat that can be shared among six to eight

people, is also paired with two hot beverages and a divine selection of spreads. Order 24 hours in advance. It costs BD35 every day from 8am to 10pm at the Ritz Gourmet Lounge.

If you are looking for an exceptional team-building experiences, choose the Ritz-Carlton Bahrain. Whether it is a creative workshop or energising wellness retreat, the hotel has you covered.

Guests can also unwind with the hotel's Ashmira Botanica Sonic Serenity Treatment, where a sound healing and full-body meridian massage inspired by Chinese medicine will transport you to a different dimension.

For more information, call 17586808 or 17586418.



INTERCONTINENTAL'S TASTY TEMPTATIONS

HEAD down to InterContinental Bahrain for a great selection of delicacies for families, friends and those looking to relax this weekend.

Explore the Regency Tent's Seafood Night, featuring interactive live stations, signature dishes and ocean-inspired beverages. It is available today from 6.30pm to 10.30pm and costs BD24net with soft beverages and BD32net

inclusive of selected beverages.

Relax with loved ones at Noor Lounge today and tomorrow, August 8, with a gorgeous high tea. Enjoy a selection of treats, sandwiches and beverages from 2pm to 7pm, at BD6.500 per person. The experience can be upgraded with unlimited bubbly for BD4.

For those seeking a luxurious morning, opt for the hotel's floating breakfast. Enjoy scrumptious breakfast bites for two at BD19net everyday

from 9am to noon.

Visit Legendz SteakHouse to enjoy a perfectly grilled tenderloin paillard with mushrooms, served with a choice of crispy pommes frites or a fresh salad on Tuesday, from 6pm to 10pm. Optional add ons include grilled shrimp or roasted vegetables. Live piano music sets a refined mood and the experience costs BD14net.

For more information or bookings, call 36967701.

FAMILY TIME: Summer staycation



SUMMER INDULGENCE AT FOUR SEASONS

MAKE the most of your summer with a relaxing retreat at Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay.

Make a splash with the little ones in the water park, soak up the sun on the white-sand beach and enjoy all-day entertainment at the vibrant beach club. Bahrain residents can enjoy a 20 per cent discount on rooms and exclusive dining savings.

Bay View Lounge introduces Bao Bonanza, a limited time menu that is not to be missed. Highlights include slow-cooked beef brisket with chipotle, spicy Asian-style lobster, mango chicken and more, from

11.30am to midnight.

This summer, the celebration gets cooler as CUT and re/ASIAN CUISINE reunite with the flavour artisans at Scoop Creamery for a week-long indulgence of handcrafted ice cream sandwiches. Discover six exclusive creations at each restaurant until August 9.

Soar to the 50th floor and take your seat at re/ASIAN CUISINE's Sushi Bar, where handcrafted nigiri, sashimi and signature rolls are prepared before your eyes. Savour bold favourites such as crispy shrimp potstickers, miso honey salmon and more. It is



AFTERNOON TEA: Pastries and sandwiches galore



GRILLED: Sliced steak

Leisure Scene

Weekly Entertainment



FLAVOURFUL: Fajitas Night



CHILL: Ice cream sandwiches

priced a la carte. Relax and unwind with the Night Spa experience, designed exclusively for two. Begin with a 60-minute aromatherapy massage beside the softly-lit waters of the indoor pool. After the treatment is over, savour an hour of complete privacy from midnight to 1am, with the pool all to yourselves. A chilled bottle of your preferred beverage awaits you, alongside handcrafted

chocolates, delicate macrons and fresh berries. It costs BD280 for 120 minutes from Sunday to Wednesday and BD295 on weekends. Experience the calming flow of Moon Yoga on Saturday, August 9, from 6.30pm to 7.30pm. It costs BD6 per person for hotel guests and members and BD12 for outside guests. For more information, contact 17115000 or 17115044.

SHERATON Bahrain Hotel invites guests for a magnificent three course special lunch menu featuring vibrant flavours from around the world.

Available every weekday, from noon to 3pm, the daily changing menu features dishes from Spain, Italy, Peru and Asia and costs BD10.500net, including homemade iced tea. Join Chef Doris and her team tonight for an extraordinary buffet featuring signature dishes, appetisers and more. The feast will be available from 6pm to 11pm, at BD19.500net per person, inclusive of soft beverages, tea or coffee. Meanwhile, Braserio Atlántico, which sits against the breathtaking Manama skyline, is now open for lunch and invites you to indulge in a unique fusion of Argentine culinary traditions.

Chefs have expertly created dishes using traditional wood fire techniques, inspired by the rich heritage of the region. Lunch is served daily from noon to 3pm, while dinner heats up from 7pm to 11pm. And for those in the mood for something a little more spirited, the lounge is open from 4pm to 2am, boasting a drinks list that champions organic mocktails and Argentine beverages. Get ready for a flavour-packed adventure at The WILD Brunch. Indulge in premium dishes and sip on handcrafted beverages as live entertainment electrifies the atmosphere every Friday, from 12.30pm to 5pm. It costs DB38 net per person for soft beverages and BD46 with selected beverages. Ladies can enjoy a special rate at BD23. For something a little gentler in pace, Daily Afternoon Tea at &More by Sheraton offers a refined escape between 2pm and 5pm. Enjoy tiered trays of flaky pastries, warm scones, savoury sandwiches and aromatic teas or coffee – all for BD15net. Pre-booking is



TASTY: Wild's Chef Night

EMBARK ON A FLAVOURFUL ADVENTURE!

essential to secure a spot. Those with a sweet tooth should take note: Sheraton Bahrain Hotel has teamed up with Maya La Chocolaterie to offer exclusive, handcrafted chocolates. Made locally using top-tier ingredients, these luxurious bites are steeped in Arab tradition. For more information or bookings, call 17517715 or 38885409.



MEATY GOODNESS: Daily lunch at Wild



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

THE NAKED GUN (18+) Lietenant Frank Drebin Jr becomes a police officer like his legendary father and must save the police department from shutting down by solving a case. **Actors:** Liam Neeson, Pamela Anderson, Paul Hauser

Timings: 11.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 5.30pm, 7.30pm, 9.30pm, 11.30pm

SHE RIDES SHOTGUN (15+)

A girl marked for death must fight and steal to stay alive, learning from the most frightening man she knows – her father.

Actors: Taron Egerton, Odessa A'zion, John Lynch

Timings: 5pm, 9.30pm

BRING HER BACK (18+)

A brother and sister uncover a terrifying ritual at the secluded home of their new foster mother.

Actors: Billy Barratt, Sora Wong, Jonah Phillips

Timings: 12.15pm, 2.30pm, 4.45pm, 7pm, 9.15pm, 11.30pm

THE BAD GUYS 2 (PG)

Reformed criminals Mr Wolf, Mr Snake, Mr Piranha, Mr Shark and Ms Tarantula are trying very hard to be good. However, they soon find themselves hijacked into a high-stakes heist that is masterminded by a new team of delinquents they never saw coming.

Actors: Sam Rockwell, Marc Maron, Craig Robinson

Timings: noon, 4pm, 6.15pm, 8.30pm



Pulse of Pop

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



HEARTTHROBS: The Jonas Brothers

HUMMING HOME TUNES

THE Jonas Brothers are dropping their seventh album *Greetings from Your Hometown* tomorrow, August 8.

The new project embraces elements of the American pop-rock trio's hometown New Jersey, drawing inspiration from disco pop sounds.

The second single of the album, titled *No Time to Talk*, is reminiscent of the 1977 banger *Stayin' Alive* by the Bee Gees.

The musical siblings Joe, Nick and Kevin Jonas are expected to feature on the production.

"It really is a love letter to our roots musically and to our home state," Nick said in an interview.

"There's a heavy influence of Bruce Springsteen and storytelling behind some of the greats from the state. But also, it's just about coming back to those roots.

"We are a family at our core, more than a band or anything else. Any time we come back to that feeling of playing music in our living room in Jersey, it's a great feeling," he added.

Formed in 2005, the band first gained popularity for its contributions to various Disney projects, most famously the Disney Channel show *Hannah*

Montana. The then teen heart-throbs later appeared in the films *Camp Rock* (2008) and *Camp Rock 2: The Final Jam* (2010).

In 2013, the band split up due to creative differences causing a 'deep rift', with each of them pursuing individual projects.

In 2019, the Jonas Brothers announced the end of their 'hiatus' on social media, and released their fifth album *Happiness Begins*.

Greetings from Your Hometown serves as a follow up to *The Album* (2023), which received generally positive reviews

for its feel-good tunes and catchy melodies, which captured the band's essence.

This year marks 20 years since the group's formation, which the brothers will be celebrating by embarking on the *Jonas20: Greetings from Your Hometown Tour*.

UNEXPECTED SISTERHOOD

CONTEMPORARY fiction novel *Loved One* by Aisha Muharrar is hitting the shelves on August 12.

When Julia's first-love-turned-best-friend Gabe, a musician with a cultish following, dies unexpectedly at 29, she goes on a quest to recover possessions he left with friends and acquaintances across the world.

Throughout her journey, she encounters Gabe's ex-girlfriend Elizabeth, and the two find themselves reconciling their respective claims on Gabe's memory.

"The characters in my book all react differently to grief, which feels true to life," Aisha said in an interview. "Some people can't sleep, some people sleep all the time; some people get angry at the deceased, capturing a full range of grief."

"I think, when it comes to grief, what we're actually dealing with is this missing space in our lives. There was someone, a person who was unique, who had never been before and will never



The book cover

be again. Grief is learning to live with that missing space," she added.

Aisha's debut as a novel writer follows her previous release – an essay collection titled *More Than a Label: Why What You Wear and Who You're With Doesn't Define Who You Are* (2002).

The author also worked as a writer for NBC's sitcom series *Parks and Recreation* and *The Good Place*.

THE latest episode of Hawaiian historical drama *Chief of War* releases tomorrow, August 8, on Apple TV+.

Based on true events, the story takes place at the end of the 18th century when the four major kingdoms of the Hawaiian Islands – Hawai'i, Maui, O'ahu, and Kaua'i – were in a state of war.

The series showcases what happened during the unification of the Hawaiian Islands under King Kamehameha I through the lens of Ka'iana (Jason Momoa), a warrior chief who rebelled against it.

The actor, who is also the writer, director and executive producer of the show, revealed that most of the show is in Hawaiian, with English

HEROIC: Jason as Ka'iana with other actors on screen



gradually appearing in later episodes, to preserve cultural and historical authenticity.

"You have to understand. This is not just us working our day job, this is our heritage,"

Jason said in an interview. "I'm not playing a fictitious character or a superhero. These are my ancestors. If I mess any of this up, we're not coming home. We were not allowed to move onto the

next scene until one of the dialect supervisors said we could," he added.

Creator Thomas Pa'a Sibbett highlighted the authenticity of the show saying, "If you remove the language, you remove the

reality."

The first two episodes of the show were out on August 1.

It will continue with a weekly episode released every Friday until September 19.

A TRIBUTE TO HERITAGE

MotoringWeekly

The top motoring and motorsport news

LEWIS 'FRUSTRATED – NOT DEMOTIVATED'

FORMULA One's August break will be a welcome getaway for Lewis Hamilton after he triggered fresh speculation about his Ferrari future with self-critical and cryptic comments in Hungary at the weekend.

The most successful Formula One driver of all time, with seven world championships and a record 105 wins, has had a tough start to his time at Maranello and has yet to stand on the podium in 14 races.

The 40-year-old Briton has also been sending out conflicting messages, his season a roller-coaster of highs and lows – downbeat assessments and despondency followed by peaks of elation and hope.

In Canada in June he assured reporters he was at Ferrari for the long term.

"To everyone writing stories of me considering not racing – I literally only just started here with Ferrari," he said at the time.

"There's no question where my head's at and what I'm working towards achieving with this team. So, there's zero doubts. Please stop making stuff up."

At the Hungaroring last Saturday, after qualifying 12th, he described himself as 'useless' and suggested Ferrari might want to replace him.

Post-race, also 12th, Hamilton said there was a lot going on in the background – without explaining – and he looked forward to returning after the break – 'hopefully'.

Current boss Fred Vasseur and principal at Mercedes Toto Wolff saw that as just Hamilton being Hamilton, with the former saying the Briton was frustrated and not demotivated. His former boss Wolff said Hamilton had always worn his heart on his sleeve, beating himself up about his performances.

With Mercedes in Brazil last year he hinted

in a radio message that he might not finish the season, saying later that in the moment he had not wanted to continue.

There are legitimate doubts about whether Hamilton can achieve what he wants – the unfinished business of a record eighth title – at Ferrari.

He has not won a race for more than a year, not started on pole for more than two, and is enduring the worst podium drought of his stellar career with 16 successive races outside the top three.

Sunday was his lowest career finish in Hungary, a circuit where he has triumphed a record eight times and taken nine poles.

Teammate Charles Leclerc has been on the podium five times this season and started on pole on Sunday.

The Briton won a Shanghai sprint from pole in March but has been out-qualified 10-4 by Leclerc and beaten 11-2 in races, with both disqualified in China.

Last season, Hamilton was out-qualified 18-6 by Mercedes teammate George Russell and was beaten 15-9, although they ended up with two wins apiece.

The rules are changing next year, the start also of a new engine era, and Hamilton has already said this season is all about settling in before a proper challenge in 2026.

"Lewis has unfinished business in F1," said Wolff. "You ask me whether he has it, he definitely has it."

Some others are questioning how much longer he should continue.

"Sad to see Sir Lewis so downhearted. It's tough to know when it's time. Another year? It gets harder. Maybe a good holiday is needed?," commented 1996 champion and compatriot Damon Hill on X.

"Lewis is tired. He's been doing what he is doing forever. He needs a rest from it for good, a total reset to do something completely different," former F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone told the *Daily Mail*.



STRUGGLING: Hamilton

WOLFF ADMITS GOING BACK TO OLDER PACKAGE KEY FOR MERCEDES

REVERTING to an older car package was the key to Mercedes' improved pace at the Hungarian Grand Prix after a string of underwhelming performances, according to team principal Toto Wolff.

George Russell secured his sixth podium of the season with a strong third-place finish, passing early race leader Charles Leclerc in the closing laps at the Hungaroring.

His teammate, 18-year-old Kimi Antonelli, claimed the final point in 10th place – his first top-10 result in four races.

The team had reverted to a previous suspension specification after

determining that a May upgrade had introduced instability.

Although initially intended to address performance issues, the upgrade had unintended consequences that shook driver confidence and contributed to the team's recent struggles.

"I think that we tried to solve a problem with an Imola upgrade," Wolff said.

"It may not have solved the issue but instead let something else creep into the car – an instability that took confidence away from the drivers.

"It took us a few races to figure that out."

Wolff admitted the team had been briefly misled by their Montreal win,

which delayed their decision to revert to the old setup.

"We came to the conclusion it needs to go off – it went off, and the car is back to solid form," he added.

The team boss was frank about the failed upgrade, noting that the newer rear axle will be 'ending in a bin somewhere'.

"Upgrades are supposed to bring performance. But when they don't correlate with what the simulations show, it's a tough lesson," he added.

Mercedes now hopes the regained stability will carry forward as they continue to chase McLaren, Red Bull and Ferrari in the championship standings.



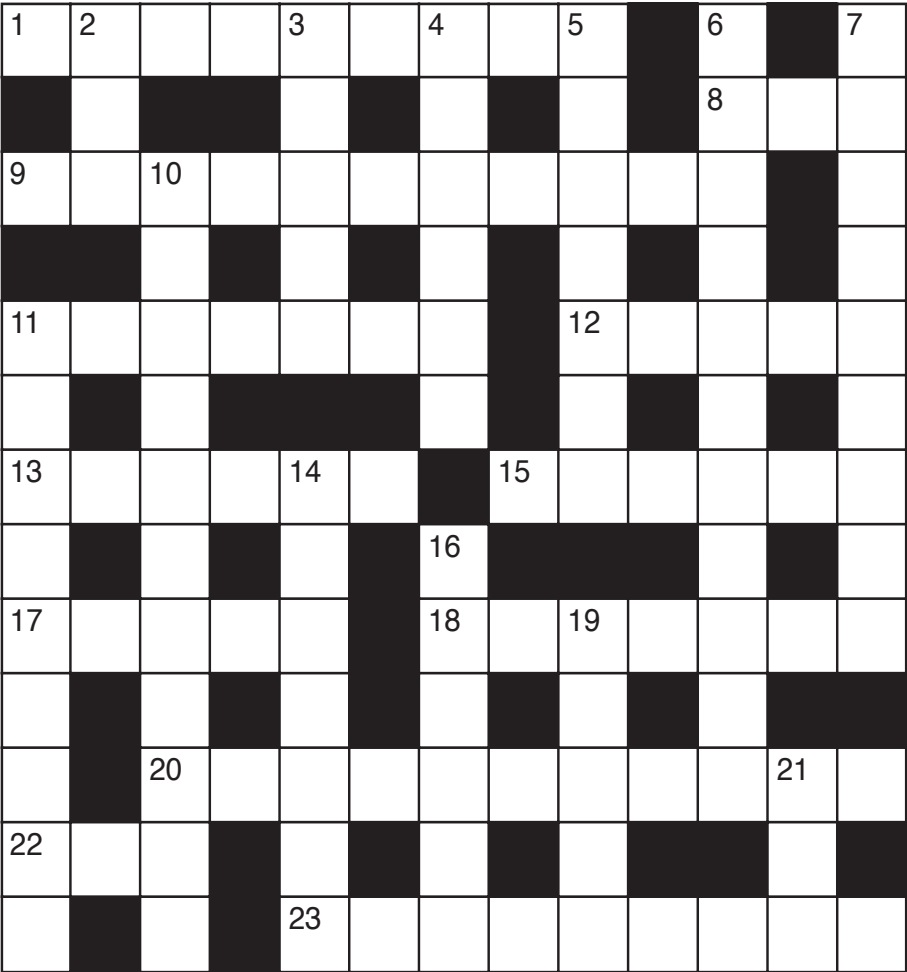
UPBEAT: Wolff

Time Out



Hilal Computers
Maximizing performance and efficiency
Dell service provider
Tel: 1729 3749 ext 2220

crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

- ACROSS**
1. Specious (9)
8. Hasten (3)
9. Perceptible (11)
11. Skill (7)
12. Spine (5)
13. Commend (6)
15. Tractable (6)
17. Upright (5)
18. Died out (7)
20. Impolite (3-8)
22. Lettuce (3)
23. Invigorated (9)
- DOWN**
2. Circuit (3)
3. Harsh (5)
4. Seethed (6)
5. Ban (7)
6. Wage-earner (5-6)
7. Increase (9)
10. Stamp-collector (11)
11. Pre-eminence (9)
14. Colonist (7)
16. Advantage (6)
19. Taut (5)
21. Sheep (3)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... was the father of Priam in Greek mythology?

WHAT ... does mea culpa mean?

WHERE ... was the first ghetto in Europe established?

WHO ... etched the engravings Beer Street and Gin Lane?

WHAT ... is the 12th letter of the Greek Alphabet?

WHERE ... is the capital of Kedah?

WHEN ... was the first Cannes Film Festival?

just so



i i i i
ROAD

FROM 2

1 3 5 7 9 end end end

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

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

Across: 7 Opaque;
8 Refute; 10 Retinue;
11 Attic; 12 Abut;
13 Scrap; 17 Silly; 18 Stir;
22 Truth; 23 Salient;
24 Casual; 25 Prolix.

Down: 1 Journal; 2 Tactful;
3 Funny; 4 Getaway;
5 Quota; 6 Reach;
9 Merciless; 14 Highway;
15 Steeple; 16 Pretext;
19 Stick; 20 Quash;
21 Glare.

Who, What, Where, When: Richard Dunwoody and West Tip; The screen at the back of an altar; Hindu Kush; 1953; Ralph Waldo Emerson; Quetzal; Cambodia; 1841.

Just So: As often as not, Arch enemy, High jinx, Change of heart

Darn Tough Sudoku

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

Your work pad here ...