



## A TREK INTO HISTORY



## BAHRAIN 'ENDUREIGNS'



### ACE MISSION

Saudi female astronaut  
on space journey



### EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL GEARS UP



### ECHOSPEECH: AI-EQUIPPED EYEGLASSES CAN READ THE SILENT SPEECH



### OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE: THE TRUSTED CHOICE FOR SAFETY AND TRANSPARENCY



## SPOTLIGHT

# ADVENTURER TALAL PUTS BAHRAIN ON THE MAP



Talal Alhasan raised his nation's flag at the world's largest cave, Hang Son Doong in Vietnam, making him the first Bahraini to achieve the feat. For the 31-year-old, the mentally and physically challenging expedition was extremely satisfying, with a big takeaway being identifying his own strengths.

In an exclusive interview with *Bahrain This Week*, Talal spoke of his experience, which was one of sheer challenge and excitement.

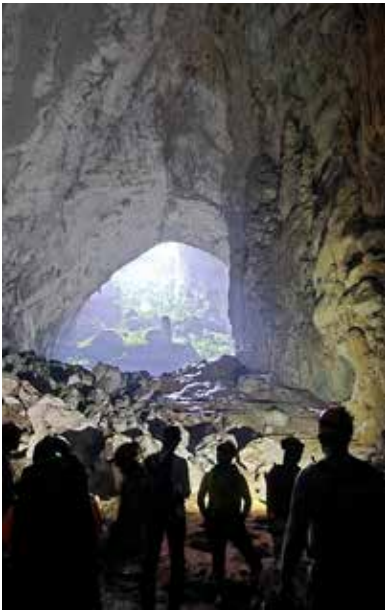
"The experience was both exhilarating and terrifying—the perfect balance; there were moments of excitement and rest, and the fear factor added to the thrill," said Talal.

Talal put his foot on the 'birthday cake' - the iconic Hang Son doon on after traveling nine kilometers in four days. He was the only Bahraini on board the 10-member team who took the trek organized by Oxalis Adventures in Vietnam. The adventurers were diverse, including a Bangladeshi, two Vietnamese, and a Swiss man with his inspiring Vietnamese wife, both in their 50s. They were accompanied by

chefs, porters, and safety guards, and the team was led by a cave expert and member of the British Cave Association. "In 2018, I conquered Kilimanjaro, but this latest adventure trip has truly surpassed it in terms of sheer challenge and excitement," said Talal. "Unlike Kilimanjaro, where you simply hike at high altitude, this trip involved bouldering over rocks, navigating around obstacles, and sometimes even crawling or slipping. The terrain was treacherous, with slippery stalagmites and massive rock formations that required careful navigation. But the biggest challenge came at the end of the cave, where the only way out was to ascend using technical ropes. It was definitely the most challenging part of the trip, but also the most rewarding." Talal discovered the cave in 2018 and was attempting to join a team to go there, but there were no spots available, and subsequently the trip was shelved due to the pandemic. However, his determination was reignited in 2022, and he revived the



SPOTLIGHT



correspondence with the company, wherein he informed them that he was from Bahrain and shared his deep desire to experience this natural wonder. Things changed, and within two weeks, he was on the first spot on the waitlist.

"Now, my eagerness to explore Hang Son Doong has soared, and I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime experience," he said.

"My curiosity propelled me forward, and I found myself in Hanoi, ready to start my journey. The weather was mostly pleasant, with temperatures ranging from 25 to 26 degrees Celsius during the day and cooling off at night. We camped out at three different campsites, and the experience was challenging but rewarding. I came back with a new appreciation for nature."

The team started its journey at the magnificent Hang En cave, the third biggest cave in the world, and then spent the first night at campsite one in Hang En cave, while the second and third nights were at campsites two and three, respectively, in Hang Son Doong. On the fourth day, they climbed the Great Wall of Vietnam, which Talal described as "a monumental feat and a truly unforgettable experience".

"At the highest point within the cave, I proudly raised the Bahraini flag. Even in my wildest adventures, I never expected to have such a personal moment of accomplishment. It wasn't just for me, but for my country too. After five long hours of hiking, the energy I felt from raising that flag was invigorating. I never imagined that such a simple act could be so powerful."

Even while braving leeches and poison ivy and cautiously treading every step on the slippery rock trail, Talal was watchful and admiring of nature's brilliance—the lush green rainforest and the majestic rock formations that dazzled at their best as sun rays benevolently kissed them through the dolines.

"The caves themselves are home to a breath-taking rainforest, with a particular spot that is referred to as the "birthday cake" due to its iconic shape," said Talal.

"During my visit, it was heavily

raining and it was filled with water, creating a stunning display. The cave also boasts three dolines—holes in the roof that allow sunlight to filter in. The largest of these dolines creates a lush rainforest within the cave, while the other areas are dominated by impressive rock formations. As you approach any of the dolines, the greenery becomes more and more pronounced. It truly feels like stepping onto another planet."

Moreover, during the four-day trek, they were completely off the grid with no signal, and the only means of communication was a satellite phone, which may not work in all camps.

"This may sound daunting, but it's a truly beautiful experience. Without distractions, you'll be fully present in the moment, focusing on each step you take and the breath-taking scenery around you."

He also recalled his interactions with the rest of the team at the end of the day, which he said left a "lasting impact".

Talal admitted that as a child, he was hesitant to try new things. However, when he attended university in Washington, DC, for five years, he was surrounded by majestic mountains, winding rivers, and breath-taking landscapes, and on his hikes, he felt a newfound sense of energy and excitement.

"I see myself as someone who enjoys adventure, but I also have moments of fear," said Talal.

"Even the bravest and most adventurous people can experience fear. For example, when I explored a cave, I felt fear due to my fear of heights and traveling alone. However, I have taught myself that even when fear arises, pushing through it can lead to a sense of accomplishment and joy. It's important to remember that fear and societal norms should not hold us back from living our best lives. So, take the leap and trust in yourself; you may be surprised at what you're capable of achieving without any external help."

The business management professional working with his family business, Bahrain Gas, has an inspiring family to whom he credits his merits: his parents, Bashar Alhasan and Aisha Khunji, elder brother Fahad, and his sister Fatima.



## ADVANCEMENT

# ACCELERATING THE DIGITAL FUTURE

**Beyon announces a \$250 million investment in digital infrastructure in Bahrain**



Beyon has announced a major investment of more than \$250 million in three key state-of-the-art digital infrastructure projects that will help support the acceleration of Bahrain's digital transformation and the growth of the country's digital economy.

Batelco, part of the Beyon group, has joined the SEA-ME-WE 6 (Southeast Asia, Middle East, and Western Europe) consortium, which is building a 21,700 km-long undersea telecommunications cable system connecting Bahrain with 14 other countries. Additionally, Batelco is investing to build a regional subsea cable, the 'Al Khaleej' Cable, which the company will fully own, enhancing the region's data exchange. Beyon also announced Data Oasis, which will be the biggest technology hub in Bahrain and include a newly built advanced data center for the company.

The key announcements were made by Beyon Chairman Shaikh Abdulla bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Bahrain Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) General Director Phillip Marnick, and SEA-ME-WE 6 Management Committee Chairperson Yue Meng Fai in a press conference at Centraal, Beyon Campus, Hamala. Also in attendance was Beyon chief executive Mikkel Vinter.

"A robust connectivity infrastructure is central to the growth of the digital economy, and these major initiatives will support the acceleration of the digital future for

Bahrain in line with the kingdom's vision 2030," said Shaikh Abdulla.

"The announcement by Beyon reflects more delegates commitment to continue to contribute to the national economy by investing in key economic sectors through our portfolio companies.

"We are thrilled to see Beyon's considerable investment in Bahrain's digital economy, which aligns with the economic priorities of the kingdom's Vision 2030 and undoubtedly will bolster power in regional and international connectivity."

The SEA-ME-WE 6 cable system, offering one of the lowest latencies available between the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Western Europe, will significantly boost Beyon's global network infrastructure. SEA-ME-WE 6 will have the capability of transferring more than 100 terabits per second. The new subsea cable will create a layer of network diversity and resilience for the heavily used routes connecting the Middle East to Europe and Asia.

The Al Khaleej Cable, Batelco's fully owned subsea cable, will extend from Bahrain to other regional countries, including Oman, the UAE, and Qatar. This will help diversify routes and augment international connectivity for the region.

Meanwhile, the biggest and most advanced data center that will be located within Beyon Data Oasis is being developed on a 140K sq m

site located in the south of Bahrain. It will incorporate the SEA-ME-WE 6 and the Al Khaleej cables into the data center, therefore enabling hyperscalers and businesses to access seamless integrated solutions and helping to strengthen Bahrain's position as a leading regional technology hub. Furthermore, the new data center will feature multiple megawatts of power capacity and utilize clean power technologies provided by the company's solar park, aligning with its sustainability plans to increase alternative power sources.

"Beyon is delighted to join hands with other leading international communication companies and join the SEA-ME-WE 6 cable consortium, which will support and strengthen connectivity in the region," said Mr. Vinter.

"We are also pleased to reaffirm our commitment to building state-of-the-art facilities that help to attract global tech companies plus leading local and regional companies by building Beyon's new data center, which will be the biggest in Bahrain.

"Our significant investment, the biggest of its kind in Bahrain's history, reflects the immense importance we place on meeting the requirements of the business industry and our commitment to supporting the growth of Bahrain's digital ecosystem."

Mr. Marnick noted that the announcement was very important and will have a significant impact on the development of a robust digital

connectivity infrastructure for Bahrain.

"The deployment of advanced technologies for citizens, residents, and businesses gives them access to the latest communication solutions and also further enhances Bahrain's position as a leading digital hub," he said. "

Mr. Fai welcomed Batelco to the consortium, which will directly connect Bahrain to the cable and enhance the overall coverage of the SEA-ME-WE 6.

"With millions of people living and working remotely today, this new cable system will support all partners to provide superior broadband access along this multi-regional data superhighway, enabling them to meet and exceed the capacity demands of their customers," he said.

"By building more capacity and flexibility, we are ensuring readiness for future needs."

In addition to Beyon in Bahrain, the SMW6 consortium includes its sister company Dhiraagu in the Maldives and additionally Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company, Bharti Airtel (India), China Unicom, Djibouti Telecom, Mobily (Saudi Arabia), Orange (France), PCCW Global, Singtel (Singapore), Sri Lanka Telecom, Telecom Egypt, TM (Malaysia), Telin (Indonesia), and Trans World Associates (Pakistan).

The SEA-ME-WE 6 submarine cable connectivity to Bahrain and the Al Khaleej Cable are expected to be completed by Q2 2026.

# NEW ILA PREMISES A 'GAME-CHANGER' MOVE

Patron optimistic about Indian Ladies Association's enhanced community impact and reach



The oldest expatriate women's group in the GCC – Indian Ladies Association (ILA) is moving to a new facility that will provide more space for activities and services, and would benefit its free Recreation Centre for Children with Intellectual Disabilities - SNEHA. This move will be a game-changer for the ILA, opined its patron Monika Srivasatav, wife of the Indian Ambassador Piyush Srivasyava.

Her comments to the Bahrain This Week, followed the announcement made by ILA president Sarada Ajith on the series of activities that the organisation has lined up for the year including its plans to move into a

spacious villa in Zinj.

"As a patron of the ILA, I am thrilled about the organisation's growth and evolution, as announced by its president (Ms Ajith), particularly with the new premises soon to be operational," said Ms Srivastava.

"The move to a new facility that will provide more space for ILA activities and services, enabling them to expand their reach and impact on the community. The relocation will directly benefit the SNEHA Recreation Centre for Children with Intellectual Disabilities. It will allow the centre to increase its capacity and provide more opportunities and services to

children with intellectual disabilities."

The centre since 1987, which is the flagship project of the 68-year-old organisation, currently has 17 students who are taken care of by a group of dedicated volunteers alongside two trained teachers and two helpers. The centre is open to children of all nationalities and offers free services.

"I believe that the new premises will be a game-changer for the ILA, and I am excited about the future prospects of the organisation," said Ms Srivastava.

"The ILA's dedication to serving the community, coupled with the new facility's increased capacity, will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the SNEHA Centre allowing the organisation to continue making a significant difference in the lives of those in need."

Among the other initiatives of the ILA, as announced by Ms Ajith, is the upcoming Leela Jashanmal Lecture which is set to host India's Defense Research and Development Organisation's Advanced Systems Laboratory director Dr Tessy Thomas, famed as India's 'Missile Woman'. The talk since 2007 is held in honour

of ILA founder Leela Jashanmal. Also lined up is the Grand ILA Dandiya in October, a much-awaited fundraiser cultural dance fest, funds generated from which is used to support SNEHA activities. The ILA also concluded its fundraiser fun-fair Anand Bazaar, which was held at the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam, after eight years. Proceeds from the event will be used to fund local charity activities such as workers' welfare, English-language classes for low-income workers and outreach programmes for local charities.

Ms Ajith also highlighted ILA's mission this year to increase its membership to help widen its "pool of friendship and talent" to serve the community in line with its motto – 'Service without Self'.



## TECH UPDATE

# ECHOSPEECH: AI-EQUIPPED EYEGLASSES CAN READ THE SILENT SPEECH



Cornell's Smart Computer Interfaces for Future Interactions (SciFi) Lab has built AI-equipped eyeglasses

called EchoSpeech- a silent-speech recognition interface. Based on lip and mouth

movements, EchoSpeech continually recognizes up to 31 unvoiced commands using acoustic detection and artificial intelligence. The interface uses low power and requires just a few minutes of user training data before it will recognize commands and can be run on a smartphone.

EchoSpeech transmits inaudible sound waves toward the skin using speakers and microphones positioned on a glass frame. EchoSpeech collects small skin deformations brought on by silent utterances and uses them to infer silent speech by analyzing echoes from numerous paths.

EchoSpeech addressed those challenges that can recognize both discrete and continuous speech.

Ruidong Zhang said, "For people who cannot vocalize sound, this silent speech technology could be an excellent input for a voice synthesizer. It could give patients their voices back."

The EchoSpeech glasses transform into a wearable AI-powered sonar system, sending and receiving soundwaves across the face and tracking lip movements when equipped with a pair of microphones and speakers no larger than pencil erasers. Then, with around 95% accuracy, a deep learning algorithm created by SciFi Lab researchers examines these echo profiles in real-time.

Cheng Zhang, assistant professor of information science in the Cornell Ann S. Bowers College of Computing and Information Science and director of the SciFi Lab, said, "We're very excited about this system because it pushes the field forward on performance and privacy. It's small, low-power, and privacy-sensitive, all important features for deploying new, wearable technologies in the real world."

By Amit Malewar (Tech Explorist)



INSIDE BAHRAIN

BAHRAIN TO HOST ARAB SUMMIT 2024



Bahrain will host the 33rd Arab League Summit in 2024. The announcement was made by Arab League Under-Secretary General Hossam Zaki, on the sidelines of the 32nd Arab Summit, which concluded on Friday (May 19) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Mr Zaki said in a press statement that the kingdom has already "shown its willingness to host the next summit".

Inviting Arab leaders to the kingdom in his address to the League yesterday, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa said, "We

are pleased to express that we will welcome you all to the Kingdom of Bahrain for the upcoming Arab League Summit in 2024."

The Arab Summit, which recently concluded in Jeddah, emphasised the importance of the Palestinian cause in maintaining security and stability in the region, while strongly condemning the mistreatment and violations against Palestinians.

The 'Jeddah Declaration' emphasised the importance of concerted efforts to achieve a comprehensive and just settlement of

the Palestinian question and to find a real horizon for achieving peace. This should be based on the two-state solution, international benchmarks, related international resolutions, and the principles of international law. The declaration highlights the need to guarantee the establishment of an independent Palestinian state sovereign over its territories at the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds-East as its capital. Additionally, the declaration stressed the importance of stopping foreign interference in the internal affairs of Arab countries and refusing to support the formation of armed groups and militias outside of state institutions.

The Summit maintained that internal military conflicts will not lead to the victory of one party over

another; instead, they exacerbate the sufferings of the people, destroy their achievements, and prevent the realization of the aspirations of the citizens of the countries of the region. However, the Arab leaders affirmed that sustainable development, security, stability, and peace are inherent rights of the Arab citizen. These rights can be achieved through intensified and integrated efforts, firmly fighting against crime and corruption, and mobilising the energies and capacities that can create a future based on creativity, innovation, and monitoring various developments. This future can serve as a reinforcement for the security, stability, and well-being of the citizens of the countries in the region.



INSIDE ARABIA

ACE MISSION

Saudi female astronaut on space journey



RAYYANAH BARNAWI begins her space mission on Sunday, May 21, making the region proud as the first Arab Muslim female astronaut to attempt the feat.

She will be accompanied by fellow national Ali Al-Qarni.

The duo will embark on a journey to the International Space Station (ISS), a mission that is a

significant milestone for Saudi Arabia, showcasing the country's ambitions in space research and aligning with the goals of Vision 2030.

The mission is scheduled to launch from the United States.

While at the ISS, the astronauts will conduct 14 groundbreaking scientific experiments in microgravity. These experiments aim to provide valuable

insights for scientists and researchers, enabling them to develop innovative methods to create suitable conditions for further explorations. The outcomes of these experiments are set to contribute to the scientific progress of future space missions in the region and beyond.

The mission will also promote educational awareness by involving 12,000 Saudi students in three experiments through live feeds. This aims to inspire and engage young minds in the wonders of space exploration, fostering interest in scientific fields and encouraging future generations to pursue careers in space-related disciplines.

Once the mission is

accomplished, Saudi Arabia will join the select group of countries that have had two astronauts simultaneously present aboard the ISS. This success will elevate the kingdom's global reputation in the field of space exploration and further solidify its commitment to serving humanity.

The Saudi astronaut programme, launched on September 22 last year, plays a crucial role in preparing future astronauts and space engineers. The programme emphasises high-quality educational and training initiatives, participation in scientific experiments, international research collaboration, and the prospect of undertaking future space-related missions.





# bahrain.bh! Your destination for finding recommended universities

Looking for a place to study?  
Check out the Recommended Universities on  
**bahrain.bh**



As a student who is about to graduate, you are probably feeling a mix of excitement about what comes next. One of the biggest decisions you will have to make is where to attend university.

With so many options available, it can be overwhelming to choose the right one for you. The National Portal, **bahrain.bh** helps you make an informed decision with its Recommended Universities eServices.

Provided by the Ministry of Education, this eService allows you to Search for Recommended Universities and Programs that are accredited in Bahrain and you may submit a request for a specific program if not included among the ministry's recommendations. Additionally, you can follow up on the status of your enquiry through the eService.

On the other hand, and for students whom willing to join University of Bahrain, the National Portal offers you a number of eServices that can assist you throughout your academic journey, such as eAdmission Service where you can apply for admission of undergraduate programs, update the course specialization list, and request

status enquiry. The portal also offers Course Payment Service and Uob Bookstore Service through which the user can select their preferred method of collection, either by visiting the Bookstore at Sakhir campus or having the books delivered to their home via the postal services.

And for those willing to join Bahrain Polytechnic they can benefit from the "Course Payment" which enables student to view and pay their course fees online.

For inquiries, visit the National Suggestions and Complaints System (Tawasul) available via the National Portal, **bahrain.bh**, download the Tawasul app from the eGovernment Apps Store **bahrain.bh/apps**, or call the Government Services Contact Center on 80008001. To receive updates on the latest news and developments, follow the iGA's social media channels @iGAbahrain.

For more information, please visit the National Portal, **bahrain.bh**.

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## UPDATE

# JUICY GOODNESS AT LULU

## Mango Mania to celebrate the King of Fruits



Get ready to indulge in the succulent sweetness of the "King of Fruits" as Lulu Hypermarket outlets across Bahrain kick off the much-awaited LuLu Mango Mania Festival. With over 85 varieties of mango from 14 countries, this festival promises to be a mango lover's paradise. The festival at the Dana Mall outlet was opened by the Indian Ambassador Piyush Srivastava event.

"I am very pleased to inaugurate

the Lulu 'Mango Mania' Festival this year," said Mr Srivastava.

"The fruit is popular worldwide and symbolic of tropical goodness and nutrition. By showcasing these many varieties of mangoes, Lulu is bringing a world of good taste to Bahrain."

The Festival features 12 countries, including India, UAE, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, USA, Yemen, Uganda, Kenya, Ivory Coast, and Columbia and Peru. LuLu

Group director Juzer Rupawala, senior officials of the hypermarket, invited guests, and media invitees were present at the inauguration.

The Mango Mania Festival is all about the goodness of the fruit in many forms – from juicy harvest to desserts to curries to pickles and smoothies. Besides mangoes ripe and raw, there will also be promotions galore and treats in the Lulu Hot Food and Cold Food section with items such as mango fish curry, mango chicken curry, stuffed chicken breasts with honey mango sauce, pickles, traditional treats like Aamras (mango puree) and puri bread and new age foods like mango and flax seed vegan smoothie.

The festival this year features a cookery contest where participants are invited to present desserts with

the mango as main ingredient, great games in which the mango is the key to puzzles and visual representation and the inauguration even had a flash mob dance with the dancers in mango costumes. The winners of the mango dessert culinary contest with \$500 in prizes was won by Safnas Tharanchandy, Adhiya Alikkal and Safeena Rafi.

"This is a great festival for all mango lovers," said Mr Rupawala.

"We are pleased to offer varieties of mangoes and great deals to our customers It's definitely a great way to enjoy this delicious fruit. I'm sure everyone will find something they'll love. It's a wonderful way to celebrate summer!"

The festival runs until Tuesday (May 23).





## PR THIS WEEK

## BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AWARDED FOR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY FROM AIRPORT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL (ACI)



Bahrain Airport Company (BAC) Chief Executive Officer Mohamed Yousif Al Binfalah accepted two prestigious sustainability awards on behalf of Bahrain International Airport (BIA) at the 18th Airports Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly, Conference & Exhibition in Japan.

BIA was honored with the Green Airports Recognition 2023 Silver Award, for airports serving 8 to 15 million passengers annually, and a certificate marking its upgrade to Level 4 'Transformation' of the ACI Airport Carbon Accreditation program.

The Green Airports Recognition initiative promotes environmental best practices and acknowledges ACI Asia-Pacific airport members with outstanding accomplishments in their environmental projects.

Speaking at the event which was held for the first time in three years following the pandemic Mr. Al Binfalah said: "We are pleased to be recognized for our efforts to create a cleaner and more sustainable future

for Bahrain and the rest of the world.

"In line with our commitment to sustainability, BAC initiated a Plastic Waste Management Project in 2020, in coordination with airport stakeholders, to monitor and divert plastic waste from landfills.

"The project has seen 3,400 kg of materials diverted from landfills annually and the recycling of 137,600 kg of materials each year. Moreover, we have established a centralized dashboard to monitor plastic waste streams at BIA. We are currently working on further improvements, including substituting single-use plastics with re-usable items, and encouraging recycling within stakeholders' operations."

BIA's sustainability goals are in line with the objectives of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP). One of its main goals is to reduce Bahrain's energy consumption by 6 percent by 2025. BIA is the largest green building in Bahrain and will play a vital role in achieving this objective.

## GULF AIR AND EMIRATES ACTIVATE CODESHARE AGREEMENT



Gulf Air, the national carrier of Bahrain, has activated its codeshare agreement with the world's largest international airline, Emirates.

In the initial phase Gulf Air will apply its code to a number of Emirates destinations in Europe and the Far East, thereby increasing the number of destinations for Gulf Air customers travelling from its network. Destinations include, Denpasar Bali, Indonesia; Brazil; Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; and Czech Republic.

Gulf Air Chief Executive Officer, Captain Waleed Al Alawi welcomed

the strategic partnership, noting that it is a major value add to passengers, given the UAE's prestigious position in the global commercial aviation sector.

The airline has won a range of awards, recently being named the World's Most Improved Airline at the Skytrax World Airline Awards 2022.

Gulf Air recently announced the launch of flights to Bodrum in Turkey this summer and an increase in flights to Manchester, UK; Manila, Philippines; and Bangkok, Thailand to meet increased demand.

## THRILLING FINISH TO FIRST FIFA 23 ESPORTS 'BATTLE OF THE SCHOOLS' TOURNAMENT



In a thrilling finale to Bahrain's first FIFA 23 eSports tournament, 'Battle of the Schools' hosted by stc Bahrain in partnership with the Bahrain Schools and Collegiate Athletic Association (BSCAA), 16 young gamers, have emerged winners of the prize pool of US\$ 20,000.

The large-scale gaming competition that attracted participation from over 100 schools and 670 avid gamers witnessed 32 finalists vying for the top position of the Best FIFA 23 player with their highest set scores in the grand finale that took place at the Avenues Mall.

The top three winners, Abdullah Habib, Mohammed Muneer and Jibreel Rais, received cash prizes of US\$10,000, US\$3,800 and US\$2,000 respectively during a grand presentation ceremony presided over by Shaikh Sager Bin Al Khalifa, President – BSCAA and Nezar Banabeela, stc Bahrain CEO.

The fourth place was awarded US\$1,000 while winners from fifth to eighth place were awarded US\$400 each. Winners who ranked between ninth and sixteenth place each received US\$200 as prize money.

## INJAZ BAHRAIN SCOOPS TWO PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS AT GHEDEX



INJAZ Bahrain, a non-profit organization and a member of Junior Achievement Worldwide (JA), won two prestigious awards at the Global Higher Education Exhibition (GHEDEX) that was held at Exhibition World Bahrain.

Hosted for the first time in Bahrain, the GHEDEX exhibition inaugurated by the Minister of Education and Chairman of the Higher Education Council, Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma'a, provided an opportunity for over 200 local and international universities, colleges, and institutes to exhibit, interact, recruit and connect with over 30,000 students, parents, officials, and other academic representatives.

During the GHEDEX Awards for Excellence in Higher Education ceremony, which was held on the sidelines of the expo, INJAZ Bahrain received two coveted awards, the "Entrepreneur Development Award"

and the "Students Businesses Award", additionally INJAZ Bahrain's Company Program team 'Pytronics' from Al Jaberya Secondary Boys School was awarded the 'Leadership Development Award'.

On the occasion, Her Highness Sheikha Hessa Bint Khalifa Al Khalifa, INJAZ Bahrain Chairperson praised the team for their outstanding work stating, "We are honored to be recognized for our team efforts and the positive impact we drive across the Kingdom's educational landscape."

"These awards are a testament to our commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and innovation among Bahrain's youth. At INJAZ Bahrain, we believe in the power of young people to transform their communities and drive economic growth. We are grateful for the recognition and will continue to empower and inspire Bahraini youth to reach their full potential."



## BAHRAIN BRANCH NURSERY PARTICIPATES IN FOREVER GREEN CAMPAIGN



The second phase of the national afforestation campaign, Forever Green, has been kicked off by the National Initiative for Agricultural Development (NIAD) in cooperation with Municipal Affairs and Agriculture Ministry, and the Supreme Council for the Environment.

As a part of the campaign, Neem trees, Hibiscus, Indian jasmine and Bougainvillea have been planted in the yards of the Shaikh Jaber Al Ahmed

Al Sabah Health Center and Muaskar avenue Public Transport Station.

The plants came from the Bahrain Branch nursery as a public-private partnership for environmental projects that aim to increase green spaces and support national plans to bring carbon emissions to net zero by 2060.

NIAD Secretary-General, Shaikha Maram bint Isa Al Khalifa was present at the launch of the initiative.

## CHERY BAHRAIN WINS 'BEST SALES GROWTH RATE' AWARD AT SHANGHAI AUTO SHOW



Chery Bahrain won the 'Best Sales Growth Rate in the World' award for the year 2022-2023 during the Chery Global Business Conference at the 2023 Shanghai Auto Show.

During the conference, Chery executives shared their achievements in globalization in the past years with more than 700 dealers. The company has launched four major transformation measures to enter new markets, namely 'technology', 'products', 'consumer demand', and 'ecosystem', to support the move towards a 'new track, new journey'.

Motorcity Assistant General Manager, Saad Alzowayed said: "This prestigious award is a testament to

the hard work and dedication of the entire team at Chery Bahrain, as well as to the brand's unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation. We look forward to continuing our successful partnership with Chery in the future."

As the world's largest manufacturing country for 12 consecutive years, China has demonstrated its power in fields such as aerospace, high-speed rail, and infrastructure construction. With 11.2 million units sold worldwide, Chery is the most powerful Chinese automotive enterprise and has become a 'shining benchmark' in Chinese manufacturing.

## SCH CHAIRMAN LAUNCHES HYPERTENSION DETECTION CAMPAIGN



A hypertension detection campaign has been inaugurated under the patronage of Lieutenant General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health (SCH), Chairman of Bahrain Diabetes Society (BDS).

Dr. Shaikh Mohammed highlighted that 10 million deaths yearly are caused by high blood pressure and with early detection of the illness the numbers will decrease.

He said that the BDS's community programmes focus on public health, and diabetes in particular. He explained that studies have shown that hypertension is associated with diabetes in many cases, which could lead to cardiac, renal and

other complications.

Dr. Jalila bint Al-Sayed Jawad Hassan, Minister of Health, stressed that high blood pressure is a serious health condition that greatly increases the risk of heart, brain and kidney diseases, and is one of the main causes of premature death in the world.

She noted that, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is estimated globally that about 1.28 billion adults in the age group 30-79 years suffer from high blood pressure, and about 46% of adults with high blood pressure do not know that they have it, and less than half of adults with high blood pressure have been diagnosed with it and treated.

## BRCS AND JORDANIAN COUNTERPART JOIN HANDS TO ENHANCE HUMANITARIAN COOPERATION



The Bahrain Red Crescent Society (BRCS) discussed strengthening cooperation with the Jordan Red Crescent Society in different areas of relief and humanitarian work. This includes consulting and coordinating their response to regional and international relief appeals. The collaboration also involves delivering aid to Syrian refugees in the Zaatari camp in Jordan and addressing other relevant matters.

This occurred when a delegation from the Bahrain Red Crescent Society participated in the Jordan Red Crescent's 75th anniversary celebration in Amman, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Bahraini delegation consisted of Mubarak Al-Hadi, the Secretary-General of the Bahrain Red Crescent Society, and Dr. Fawzi Amin, a member of the Society's Board of Directors.

During the event, the Royal College

of Surgeons in Ireland – Medical University of Bahrain (RCSI-Bahrain) was recognized for its continuous support and provision of healthcare to refugees in Jordan. This was part of their collaboration with the Jordan Red Crescent Society, the Bahrain Red Crescent Society, and the Operation Child Life Foundation. Prof. Samir Al Atoum, the President of RCSI-Bahrain, accepted the award on behalf of the university.

The Bahrain Red Crescent Society has established a memorandum of understanding with the Jordan Red Crescent Society, the Medical University of Bahrain, and the Operation Child Life Foundation. The collaboration involves the exchange of faculty and students, collaborative research, information sharing, capacity building in reaching out to those in need, and providing support.



## FILM FEST

# EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL GEARS UP



The second edition of the European Film Festival, which is in full swing in the kingdom, is set to stage five more movies at the Alliance Française.

Lined up for the next 10 days are the Italian movie 'My Brother Chases Dinosaurs', the Czech animation movie 'Even Mice Belong in Heaven', the Estonian movie 'The Little Comrade', and the French movie 'The Big Hit'.

The festival, which runs until May 31, is organised by the French Embassy in Bahrain in cooperation with the Alliance Française.

On Sunday, May 21, the festival has on its screens the Spanish movie "Schoolgirls", directed by Pilar Palomero. The 2020 movie features Celia, an 11-year-old girl who studies at a nuns' school in Spain in 1992. The arrival of a new classmate opens a small window through which Celia discovers a whole new world. Together with her new friend and some older girls, Celia enters a new stage of her life: adolescence, a period of firsts. She feels the need to experiment, try new things, and stop being a little girl, even if that entails confronting her mother and everything that once meant comfort and security.

On screen on Wednesday (May 24), the Italian movie My Brother Chases Dinosaurs, directed by Stefano Cipani, the 2019 movie features Jack's relationship with his brother Gio, a carrier of Down syndrome, as it develops over the years through childhood and

adolescence.

On Saturday (May 27), it is Even Mice Belong in Heaven, a 2021 coproduction animated film directed by Jan at the and Denisa Grimmová, credited as the most expensive Czech animated film. It is based on the book Mice Go to Heaven by Iva Procházková. The movie has won two awards—the Czech Lion Awards—for best animated film and for best music. It has also won the Czech Film Critics' Award for Best Audiovisual Creation. The film was presented at Shanghai International Film Festival, where it received an award for the best animated film.

An Estonian movie directed by Moonika Siimets, The Little Comrade, will be screened on Sunday (May 28). It is based on the novels Seltimees laps ja suured inimesed (The Little Comrade) and Samet ja saepuru ehk Seltimees laps ja kirjatahed (Velvet and Sawdust) by Leelo Tungal. The movie depicts the era of Stalinist tyranny in Estonia.

On the final day, Wednesday, May 31, the French movie "The Big Hit", directed by Emmanuel Courcol, will be screened. The 2020 comedy drama is about an actor who is past his prime giving drama lessons to prisoners in an attempt to stage a production of Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot.

The festival, which kicked off with the Ukrainian comedy "My thoughts are silent", on May 14 as a pre-opener, screened the German drama "The Audition", at its opening on May 17.

"My Thoughts Are Silent" is a 2019 movie directed by Antonio Lukich that examines the eternal problem of parents and children.

"I was very pleased to watch the Ukrainian movie "My Thoughts Are Silent," a welcomed and moving comedy in total solidarity with the Ukrainian people," said French

Ambassador, Jérôme Cauchard.

"The Audition," screened both in German and French, has received many prizes, like the Golden Shell for Best Film at the San Sebastián International Film Festival and best actress at the Stockholm International Film Festival.



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# OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE: THE TRUSTED CHOICE FOR SAFETY AND TRANSPARENCY



Open-source software is actually much safer to use than closed Source and here's why.

## 1. PUBLIC CODE IS CODE YOU CAN TRUST

The fundamental problem with much of the software that comes from large, well-known tech companies is that the source code is hidden from view. It's proprietary information, and you can get in trouble for viewing, modifying, or redistributing the code.

Your only option is to use the software as-is and trust that it's safe to run, or you can opt not to use the software instead.

This type of code is known as closed-source software. Since you can't see the code, you have no way to know exactly what the software is doing. This gives companies the freedom to do anything that can increase their profits.

This is why the apps we use monitor our behavior, track our location, and otherwise try to keep tabs on what we're doing. That information is valuable for companies to sell to data brokers or use to sell ads.

Say an open-source app wanted to introduce the same kind of data collection. Well, very few people actually want to be tracked. We value our privacy, so when given the choice to remove code that tracks our behavior, we do.

Since the source code is available for anyone to edit and redistribute, someone comes along and uses the code to create a new (sometimes virtually identical) app with the unwanted bits removed. This process is known as forking, and it discourages bad behavior.

Just like in other areas of our life, transparency tends to encourage people to behave better and deliver better results.

## 2. THOSE BIG COMPANIES? THEY ALL TRUST OPEN SOURCE

What's the first company that pops into your mind when you think of big tech? Amazon? Facebook? Apple? All three of these companies use open-source software to varying degrees and contribute back to certain projects. And they are not alone.

Consider how Microsoft invests in the Linux kernel (an open-source operating system) to make Azure a compelling cloud computing product. Google utilizes Linux not only in the cloud but on Chromebooks and Android. The companies below were all platinum members of the Linux Foundation at the beginning of 2023.

## 3. WE ARE ALL INVESTED IN THE SAME CODE

When source code is openly available, it enters a sort of public commons. Some open-source technology functions more like infrastructure. Like with public roads, we're all invested in infrastructure being reliable, private citizens and corporations together.

So while a lot of open-source software does come from volunteers, a large amount also comes from paid employees. For example, the Linux kernel is found in supercomputers and mobile phones alike. Everyone from manufacturers to scientists has reasons to contribute patches to the Linux kernel that add features or fix bugs.

Even when companies are creating products that compete with each other in the market, they're still invested in the open-source software they use being as good and stable as it can be.

## 5. THE OPEN-SOURCE COMMUNITY HAS A CODE OF ETHICS

The world of open-source software is governed by a different set of rules than those of the proprietary software

world. Many people who create FOSS do so because they believe it to be an ethical thing to do. Sometimes it's about making money, but most of the time it isn't. People often create and share their code out of the goodness of their hearts.

That's not to say that people are selfless. There are many gains aside from money. Many people learn how to program by viewing already available source code, and they want to give back. Others have benefited from open-source alternatives to paid programs that they couldn't afford and want to create similar software for people like them.

Some simply like having the freedom to do whatever they want with the software on their machines and can't imagine placing restrictions on themselves or others.

Users hold their software creators to strict standards. People stir up outrage over changes that people wouldn't bat an eye at in the proprietary software world, such as when Canonical added Amazon recommendations to Ubuntu (which they eventually removed as a result).

In the free software world, the default expectation is that you don't restrict who has access to your app, you don't limit how they can use it, and you don't track their behavior.

## 5. OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME

Many open-source projects have been around for decades. Consider Mozilla Firefox, LibreOffice, GIMP, Audacity, and VLC. These are programs that have gradually gotten better, gaining new features while losing old bugs. The same can be said for background software, like the Linux kernel, or desktop environments, like GNOME and KDE. This software is mature and proven.

This isn't to say that there isn't

stable closed-source software that has been around for years. There are. But you already trust proprietary software. The point here is that plenty of open-source software is just as time-tested, if not more so.

It's also worth noting how in the proprietary software world when a company goes bust, its software goes away. Unless someone purchased the rights, no one gets to see the code. It simply disappears.

With open-source software, a project may become unmaintained, with no versions no longer appearing. But the code continues to exist, and some people may use this code to create newer software. So even if an app seems dead, its code may live on.

## Open-Source Software Is the Most Trustworthy Software

Open-source software doesn't always offer the most features or the best performance. There are many proprietary programs that outdo the competition. But when it comes to matters of trust, that is an area where open-source software serves best.

It isn't after your data. It doesn't want to serve you ads. It isn't trying to lock you into an ecosystem. If you want to use your computer with peace of mind, free and open-source software is the way to go.



By: Dr Jassim Haji



## SPORTS

# ROYAL ENDURANCE TEAM TRIUMPHS IN SPANISH INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP



In a remarkable display of skill and determination, the Royal Endurance Team emerged victorious in the highly anticipated 120-kilometre race at the prestigious Spanish International Championship. The team's outstanding performance in both the general and junior categories earned them well-deserved accolades.

Expressing his admiration for the team's accomplishments, His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, General Sports Authority

Chairman, and Bahrain Olympic Committee President, commended their remarkable triumph. He highlighted that this victory serves as a testament to the Royal Team's continued success on international and European platforms, attributing their achievements to the exceptional leadership of His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, as well as the esteemed captain of the Royal Endurance Team. HH Shaikh Khalid emphasized

that these achievements reflect the remarkable standard reached by the sport of endurance, with the Spanish victory further building upon the remarkable performance of HH Shaikh Nasser, who secured the first position in the World Endurance Championship held in Abu Dhabi. Extending his warm congratulations, HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad praised the Royal team riders Salman Isa, Manal Fakhrawi, Ahmed Al Dhawadi, and Abdulla Al Ruwaei, who claimed the top three spots in the general category and emerged as the champion in the junior category.

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad, an enthusiastic participant in the 160-km contest, unfortunately faced disappointment when his horse failed to pass the veterinary examination after the first stage of the race. Nevertheless, he diligently followed the progress of his fellow teammates, providing unwavering support and motivation, which contributed to their remarkable achievements in both races.

Salman Isa showcased exceptional prowess, crossing the finish line first with an impressive time of 6 hours, 7 minutes, and 41

seconds. He was closely followed by Manal Fakhrawi, who exhibited remarkable determination and secured second place, finishing just a mere second later with a time of 6 hours, 7 minutes, and 42 seconds. Ahmed Althawadi displayed admirable endurance and claimed the third spot, completing the race in 6 hours, 7 minutes, and 46 seconds.

In the junior category, Abdulla Al Ruwaei outshone his competitors with an extraordinary performance, finishing in first place with a commendable time of 6 hours, 59 minutes, and 14 seconds. The remarkable achievements of the Royal Team were duly recognized, and the champions were honored at the conclusion of the championship.



## SHAIKHA HAYAT BINT ABDULAZIZ RE-ELECTED AS BTTA CHAIRPERSON



Shaikha Hayat bint Abdulaziz Al Khalifa, the incumbent Chairperson of the Bahrain Table Tennis Association (BTTA), has been reelected for a new term without facing any opposition.

Shaikha Hayat bint Abdulaziz expressed her sincere gratitude for the unwavering trust and confidence bestowed upon her by the BTTA General Assembly.

Out of the 13 candidates who

participated in the election, seven emerged victorious and secured membership on the BTTA board.

The winners conveyed their heartfelt appreciation to the BTTA General Assembly and expressed their commitment to working closely with the Chairperson. They pledged to collaborate hand in hand to enhance the development of table tennis in Bahrain.

## AL KHALDIYA CLUB CLINCHES MAIDEN TITLE IN THE NASSER BIN HAMAD PREMIER LEAGUE



On behalf of HM the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, SCYS First Deputy Chairman, General Sports Authority Chairman and Bahrain Olympic Committee, His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, attended the final match of the 2022-2023 Nasser bin Hamad Premier League, held at the Khalifa Sports City.

During the match, Al Khaldiya Club drew 1-1 against Bahrain Club, securing the top spot in the league table with 42 points and claiming their first-ever premier league championship.

In a ceremony following the match, HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad presented Al Khaldiya Club, led by Mahmood Janahi, with the shield of the Nasser bin Hamad Premier League and awarded them a cash prize of BD 75,000. HH Shaikh Khalid congratulated the club on their remarkable achievement, acknowledging the team's board of directors for their diligent efforts in preparing the club for competition and ensuring their success.

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad commended the players for their outstanding performance throughout the football season and highlighted the improved performance of the national clubs during this period. He also praised Al Khaldiya Club for their accomplishments in recent years, including their second title after winning the King's Football Cup in 2021.

Furthermore, HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad expressed his appreciation to the Bahrain Football Association (BFA), led by Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, for their exceptional organization of the football season, extending his wishes for their continued success.