Community

Edison International Academy appoints Peter Prystupa as the new principal for Dahl al-Hamam campus.

Community

Tran Hoan is on a mission to preserve Ngoc Linh ginseng, rare plant with medicinal qualities.

On the trail

In mountains of Guatemala, searching for parents deported from US without their children. P4-5

JOURNEY: Attorney Juan Carlos Villatoro walks through a rural village outside of San Juan Atitan, as he looks for parents who may have been deported from the US without their children.

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General Practitioner Clinic

Medical Laboratories & Analysis

Radiology (X-Ray, M.R.I. & Ultrasound)
**USEFUL NUMBERS**

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**Quote Unquote**

“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.”

— Abraham Lincoln

**Prayer Time**

- Fajr: 4.01am
- Shoroq (sunrise): 5.18am
- Zuhr (noon): 11.30am
- Asr (afternoon): 2.59pm
- Maghreb (sunset): 5.44pm
- Isha (night): 7.14pm

**Useful Numbers**

- Emergency: 999
- Worldwide Emergency Number: 112
- Kahramaa – Electricity and Water: 991
- Local Directory: 180
- International Calls Enquires: 150
- Hamad International Airport: 40106666
- Labor Department: 44508111, 44406537
- Mowasalat Taxi: 44588888
- Qatar Airways: 44490000
- Hamad Medical Corporation: 44392222, 44393333
- Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation: 44845555, 44845464
- Primary Health Care Corporation: 44593333, 44593363
- Qatar Assistive Technology Centre: 44594050
- Qatar News Agency: 44450205
- Q-Post – General Postal Corporation: 44450333
- Humanitarian Services Office: 44464444

**Theatre Listings**

- The Mall Cinema (1):
  - **Alpha** (2D) 4:45pm: Alpha (2D) 6:45pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 8:30pm; Maradona (Malayalam) 11:30pm.
  - **The Mall Cinema (2):**
    - Hotel Transylvania 3: A Monster Vacation (2D) 2:30pm; Enchanted Princess (2D) 4:15pm; Hotel Transylvania 3: A Monster Vacation (2D) 5:45pm; The Nun (2D) 7:30pm; The Nun (2D) 9:30pm; The Nun (2D) 11:30pm.
    - **The Mall Cinema (3):**
      - Stree (Hindi) 2pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 4:30pm; Miss Granny (Tagalog) 7:30pm; Peppermint (2D) 9:30pm; Paltan (Hindi) 11:30pm.
  - **Landmark Cinema:**
    - Alpha (2D) 3pm; Paltan (Hindi) 4:45pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 7:30pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 10:30pm.
  - **The Mall Cinema (1):**
    - Maradona (Malayalam) 2pm; Alpha (2D) 4:45pm; Alpha (2D) 6:45pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 8:30pm; Maradona (Malayalam) 11:30pm.
  - **Landmark Cinema (1):**
    - Alpha (2D) 3pm; Paltan (Hindi) 4:45pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 7:30pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 10:30pm.
  - **Landmark Cinema (2):**
    - Enchanted Princess (2D) 2:30pm; Hotel Transylvania 3: A Monster Vacation (2D) 4:15pm; Alpha (2D) 6pm; The Nun (2D) 7:45pm; Alpha (2D) 9:30pm; The Nun (2D) 11:15pm.
  - **Landmark Cinema (3):**
    - Hotel Transylvania 3: A Monster Vacation (2D) 2:15pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 4pm; Peppermint (2D) 7pm; The Nun (2D) 9pm; Maradona (Malayalam) 10:45pm.
  - **Royal Plaza Cinema Palace (1):**
    - Enchanted Princess (2D) 2:30pm; Enchanted Princess (2D) 4pm; Alpha (2D) 5:30pm; The Nun (2D) 7:15pm; The Nun (2D) 9:15pm; Ranam (Malayalam) 11:15pm.
  - **Royal Plaza Cinema Palace (2):**
    - Maradona (Malayalam) 2:30pm; Paltan (Hindi) 5pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 7:45pm; Ranam (Malayalam) 10:45pm.
  - **Royal Plaza Cinema Palace (3):**
    - Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 2:30pm; Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2 (Urdu) 5:30pm; Ranam (Malayalam) 9pm; The Nun (2D) 11:30pm.

**Community Editor**

Kamran Rehmat

E-mail: community@gulf-times.com

Telephone: 44466405

Fax: 44350474

**Stree**

**Direction:** Amar Kaushik

**Cast:** Rajkummar Rao, Shraddha Kapoor, Pankaj Tripathi

**Synopsis:** Set in the town of Chanderi, Stree is based on the urban legend of Nale Ba that went viral in Karnataka in the 1990s, and features Shraddha Kapoor and Rajkummar Rao in pivotal roles. A town is held in the grip of terror by tales of a mysterious woman who calls men by their name and then abducts them, leaving their clothes behind.

**Theatres:** The Mall, Royal Plaza

**Peppermint**

**Direction:** Pierre Morel

**Cast:** Jennifer Garner, John Gallagher Jr, John Ortiz

**Synopsis:** Riley North awakens from a coma after surviving a brutal attack that killed her husband and daughter. When the system shields the murderers from justice, Riley sets out to transform herself from citizen to urban guerrilla. Channeling frustration into motivation, the young widow spends years in hiding, honing her mind, body and spirit to become an unstoppable force. Eluding the underworld, the police and the FBI, Riley embarks on a deadly quest to deliver her own personal brand of punishment.

**Theatres:** Landmark, The Mall
**EVENTS**

**Acrobatic Tech Show**
*WHERE:* Ongoing
*WHERE:* Mall Of Qatar
Enjoy the supreme aerial acrobatics skill show with an exceptional laser act and a haunting music soundtrack that promises to entertain the whole family.

**Free Activities**
*WHERE:* Ongoing
*WHERE:* Swiss International School
The Swiss International School is opening its new HUB offering Zumba, Salsa, Yoga, Hip Hop, Football, Spinning, Boxercise, Drama, Piano, Violin and ABRSM music theory; enjoy a large range of activities for both kids and adults. No need for registration.

**Weekly Knitting and Crochet Circle**
*WHERE:* Qatar National Library
*WHERE:* Ongoing till September 27
*TIME:* 9am – 11am
Join the casual gathering of knitters and crocheters to work on projects and share skills in a friendly atmosphere. Participants will be welcome to bring their own supplies and projects or to borrow QNL needles and yarn. All skill levels are welcome including beginners who are interested in learning.

**Choreography Lessons - Brazilian Zouk**
*WHERE:* Music and Arts Atelier near MOI
*WHERE:* Ongoing till September 15
Brazilian zouk is characterised by the dancers’ undulating bodies and the girls’ flowing hair. Dancer or not, depending on the style of Brazilian zouk, you’ll be able to choose connection and embrace with long graceful steps. The final performance is scheduled to be on 15 September as a flashmob.

**Doha Women Forum**
*WHERE:* The Westin Doha Hotel & Spa
*WHERE:* September 26
*TIME:* 8am – 5pm
Doha Women Forum 2018: Press for Progress is a platform where women can learn from experts, get inspired by the experiences of other women, share ideas, and network. The forum will feature the stories of women who took steps to affect positive change in their workplace, their community and personal lives. The event will consist of empowering talks, group discussions and workshops.

**International Wedding Exhibition**
*WHERE:* DECC, West Bay
*WHEN:* September 26 – 30
*TIME:* 10am – 10pm
IWED 2018 is to stage a high-profile luxury wedding exhibition in order to position it in the calendar as a key appointment for the luxury market in the Middle East. This event also offers women, who are interested in fashion and luxury, the latest styles and trends in the market.

**Outdoor and five-a-side football pitches**
*WHERE:* Aspire Zone
*WHEN:* Daily
*TIME:* 7pm – 11pm
Aspire Zone's five-a-side football outdoor pitches opposite Al Waab Street are available every day from 7pm – 11pm.

**Inter-School Yoga Championship**
*WHERE:* MES Indian School, Abu Hamour
*WHEN:* October 5
*TIME:* 1pm
Indian Sports Centre is all set to organise the second edition of ‘Inter-School Yoga Championship’; sponsored by ‘The Children’s Place’. The championship has been expanded to include students of all nationalities residing in Qatar. Free training sessions can also be arranged to help schools prepare their students for the championship. Team and Individual Championship is classified into two categories of under-12 and under-18 for both boys and girls. Rolling trophy will be awarded to the champion school. Last date of entry is September 26. For further details 5564693 /55824194 or email at yoga.iscdoha@gmail.com

**Hobby Classes**
*WHERE:* Mystic Arts Centre behind Al Hilal Focus Medical Centre
*WHEN:* Wednesday – Monday
*WHERE:* Mystic Art Centre, is a holistic performing arts institution and a one stop solution for adults as well as children looking to explore their talents in various art forms. We offer classes in Carnatic Music, Hindustani Music, Karate, Yoga, Zumba, Classical Dance, Salsa, Hip Hop, contemporary and Bollywood dance forms. For details, call 4723680/ 33807609.

**Breast Cancer Awareness**
*WHERE:* InterContinental Doha
*WHEN:* October 25 – November 3
Over 700 male and female gymnasts from over 80 countries, including three Team Qatar gymnasts, will compete across 10 days of competition in Doha’s iconic Aspire Dome. Experience the drama, emotions and excitement of gymnastics. This year, with the global superstar go head-to-head in a bid to be crowned the best in the world.

**Gymnastics World Championships**
*WHERE:* Aspire Dome
*WHEN:* October 25 – November 3
Over 700 male and female gymnasts from over 80 countries, including three Team Qatar gymnasts, will compete across 10 days of competition in Doha’s iconic Aspire Dome. Experience the drama, emotions and excitement of gymnastics. This year, with the global superstar go head-to-head in a bid to be crowned the best in the world.

**After School Activities**
*WHERE:* Atelier
*WHERE:* Ongoing
Music & arts activities for students taking place after they finish their day in school includes Group Music Lessons, Hip-hop, Ballet, Drawing & Painting, Drama Theatre & Taekwondo. Ages between 5 and 10 years old after school hours.

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**Dance and instrument classes**
*WHERE:* TCA Campus, Behind Gulf Times Building
*WHEN:* Wednesday – Monday
Learn the movements of dance styles in Bollywood, Hip Hop and also the musical instruments such as Piano, Guitar, Keyboard for adults as well kids and move in the world of music. For details, contact 66523871 / 33567494.

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Compiled by Nausheen Shaikh. E-mail: gtlisting@gmail.com, Events and timings subject to change.
For a reunion

Even when parents are found, the result isn’t what the searchers might expect. Whereas parents of younger children yearn to be reunited, those of older children sometimes preferred they stay in the US, writes Cindy Carcamo

There is nothing we can do but move forward and keep fighting and searching for these deported parents

— Juan Carlos Villatoro, lawyer

As Juan Carlos Villatoro approached a remote village in Guatemala’s western highlands, he yelled at his driver to stop so he could hail a skinny teenager in a motorised rickshaw. Flashing a broad smile, he asked the boy to help him on his quest. "Pardon me, youngster," Villatoro began. "We are trying to find and help the deported parents who have children who are still detained in the United States. Do you know of a parent who is in this situation? We’d like to reunite them."

The teen shook his head. "There’s nobody here like that," he said.

This summer the US government separated more than 2,500 children from their parents after the Trump administration instituted a "zero tolerance" policy requiring anyone who crossed the border illegally to be prosecuted. The parents were taken to federal court to face misdemeanour charges.

The move ignited worldwide condemnation and was eventually stopped, but not before many adults were sent to Central America, leaving behind about 400 children — from toddlers to teens.

A federal judge has ruled that it is the US government’s responsibility to reunite families, but the brunt of the work in Guatemala often has fallen on locals such as Villatoro. Even for those familiar with the region’s terrain, history and, most crucially, culture, the task is frustrating and often unsuccessful.

On this August morning, Villatoro, 43, did not even have a name as he began his search. But he knew that a majority of the separated parents had been deported to Guatemala, and that about 100 were here in the department of Huehuetenango.

"We don’t have telephone numbers. We don’t have exact addresses or email addresses," Villatoro said. "There is nothing we can do but move forward and keep fighting and searching for these deported parents."

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The searchers work with Justice in Motion, a US-based group that is part of a network of US and Central American nonprofits. If they’re lucky, they’ll receive a name or hometown from US officials. The US government only recently began releasing phone numbers for deported parents — but those often do not work.

Even when parents are found, the result isn’t what the searchers might expect. Whereas parents of younger children yearn to be reunited, those of older children sometimes preferred they stay in the US. After all, they had left Guatemala for a better life and perhaps, some parents rationalise, they are old enough to cope in the US.

On this August morning, Villatoro, 43, did not even have a name as he began his search. But he knew that a majority of the separated parents had been deported to Guatemala, and that about 100 were here in the department of Huehuetenango. It’s a remote region, at least a six-hour drive from the nation’s capital, Guatemala City, with roads that are breathtakingly steep or easily washed away in bad storms.

Finding parents here often requires finesse and charisma. Gangs and drug cartels control some communities. In some villages, residents do not trust outsiders.

After striking out with the teenager on the motorised rickshaw, Villatoro hustled across
the paved street to an elementary school crafted from cinder blocks. With a folder tucked under his arm, he delivered his pitch to the principal.

“I know of one case!” the principal said. “There is one boy who didn’t show up to school. They say he’s up north, but I don’t think he’s detained. I think he’s free.”

She gestured toward where he could find the boy’s family — a formidable hill where black and white sheep grazed. The road was paved but too steep for his taxi.

“There aren’t many who go north from here,” she told him. “There are more in the next village in San Juan Atitlan. Maybe Santa Isabel.”

Hopping back into his taxi, Villatoro decided he’d tackle the hill by foot another time. He headed to Santa Isabel.

The car heaved up a winding road through a dense forest of pine and cypress trees that dwarfed coffee and corn plants. The driver dodged emaciated dogs and potholes as wide as basketballs.

It was almost noon when Villatoro arrived, and clouds covered the treeline as the weekly open-air market got under way in front of the village school.

Students gazed curiously as Villatoro hopped out of the taxi and walked toward a group of men chatting in Mam, one of the 21 Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala. Most of them wore the region’s traditional garb — a dark wool tunic over a white shirt and white pants. A flat straw hat adorned with a black velvet ribbon topped the elegant ensemble.

Waving at the men, Villatoro called out in Spanish for “Don Mariano,” a town leader to whom he had spoken over the phone before the trip.

“By your disposal,” Mariano Hernandez, 62, replied in Spanish and said he didn’t know who he was.

“I think there is a woman here who has been crying for her children,” he said.

“Who?” Hernandez asked.

“Her name is Nuria Lanuza, the wife of Erik Gonzalez Mejia. He’s 16. They live nearby in La Esperanita.”

“Do you know anyone there who could help us?”

After a flurry of phone calls, the secretary said a community leader known as Don Onofre might help. A short rickshaw ride later, Palacios greeted a stout elderly man sitting in a door stoop.

“I know everyone here and I don’t know that name,” he said.

“You know, it may be that he doesn’t live in La Esperanita. He may live in Nueva Esperananza.”

People often confuse the two.

After two more hours of negotiating steep hills and rural, corn-lined roads, Palacios discovered yet another village with a similar name — La Esperanza de Tajumulco. It was three hours away. On bad roads.

Defeated, Palacios decided to try the second person on his list: Erik Castillo. He supposedly lived in La Mesilla and had been separated from his 12-year-old brother.

Just after noon, Palacios arrived in La Mesilla, along the main road into and out of Mexico. Men holding walkie-talkies stood guard. Some of them — who answered to the town boss — collected wads of cash from motorists heading toward the border, less than a mile away. The toll they collected went toward road improvements, they said.

Palacios found himself inside a shop before the town boss — the cocote — a man with a lazy eye, wispy mustache and shirt unbuttoned halfway down to his belly. He sat in a chair as an older man shined his shoes.

“Why isn’t the American government here, coming to find the children?” he asked. “It’s a sin!”

He gestured to one of his assistants on a Suzuki motorcycle and handed him the name of the man Palacios was looking for. “Go find him. I’m sure it’s the same guy I’m thinking of.”

About half an hour later, a skinny woman showed up with a 5-year-old boy and introduced herself as Nuria Lanuza, the wife of Erik Castillo. With her other son still in the US, she said, she had cried for many weeks, had not been able to

Two hours passed and Palacios began feeling restless because Castillo had not shown up. For his mission to be successful, he needed to talk to the man whose name he was given. He had to find out exactly how father and son were separated and send the information to attorneys in the United States.

Gradually, it became clear the family didn’t trust him and wondered what Palacios was up to.

“My husband told me to come to see what you all wanted,” Lanuza said. “You know, there are many kidnappers here. That happens here. Children are abducted!”

Palacios assured Lanuza he just wanted to help her reclaim her son. To his surprise, Palacios learned the family knew where 12-year-old Erik was and had even been speaking with him by telephone twice a week, his mother assuring them he’d see them each of the weeks.

After some convincing, Lanuza agreed to take him to her aunt’s house to meet her husband. There, Castillo told a tale like many others of late.

Castillo and Erik were the first in the family to journey to the US, driven north by poverty and mounting debt. Lanuza and the two other children were supposed to join them later.

Castillo, 30, said he and Erik were caught by border authorities as they reached the US in early May. After the second day in detention, his son started crying and cried and Castillo fruitchly tried to console him.

Castillo said immigration officials forced him to sign documents despite his objections. He can’t read or write in English or Spanish and said he doesn’t know what he signed. Eight days later, he was deported. His son is detained in a shelter in Chicago, the father said.

“They tricked me. They said they would give him back to me when I was to be deported and they didn’t,” he told Palacios. “I want my son back. They did this to punish me. Those people are awful.”

Palacios promised to forward the family’s information to US attorneys, and it appeared his mission was a success.

A few weeks ago, a social worker from Chicago called the family to say Erik finally would come home, arriving in Guatemala City on August 23 at 10:30am. Excited, the mother bought her son a new outfit and a few bags of his favorite treats — Sabritas potato chips. On August 22, about two weeks after Palacios’ visit, the family piled into Castillo’s taxi for an eight-hour overnight trip to Guatemala City. At 3am, a few hours shy of the airport, Lanuza got a phone call.

“You said you wouldn’t be on the flight. He’s no longer coming,” she said the social worker told her.

“Why? What happened?”

“The judge has changed his mind,” the woman said. “Your son won’t arrive until September.”

“I will go there and tell him as soon as possible,” Lanuza said. “When in September will you send him?”

“I don’t know,” the woman replied. “I don’t know.”

— Los Angeles Times/TNS
Peter Prystupa appointed as the new principal at EIA

Edison International Academy (EIA) recently announced the appointment of Peter Prystupa as the new Principal of Dahl al-Hamam campus. With 25 years of experience in education sector, of which more than 10 years in leadership roles, have enabled Peter to take over the role of a mentor in shaping the lives of the students and providing much advanced learning environment with an opportunity to grow in self-belief. Peter holds a Post Graduate Diploma in School Leadership and Masters in British Studies. “Being a new addition to the school community, I am pleased to say that I am proud of our students and the way they engage so enthusiastically in the enrichment opportunities that we have to offer. While we enjoy enviable academic facilities, it is the learning environment, the sense of independence, responsibility and enjoyment that I believe characterise Edison and our students’,” Peter said in a statement.

Best Buddies holds awareness workshop on people with disability

Best Buddies Qatar and Ooredoo recently conducted a workshop on how to help and support people with disability at Ooredoo Tower. The workshop was presented by Sahar al-Kahlout and Abdullah al-Miri from Best Buddies.

According to a press release, the workshop focused on intellectual and developmental factors, definition of disability and categories, causes of disability, examples of most common disabilities, characteristics and symptoms and tips on how to help people with disabilities. With quite some attendance of the Ooredoo staff, Best Buddies addressed Ooredoo employee’s queries during the workshop and emphasised on the increasing need for more awareness about disability and its causes in the light of current misconceptions about it.

Laaler Abu-Alfain, Executive Director of Best Buddies Qatar, said that the initiative is highly keen to approach all community categories. “The initiative is to raise awareness about people with disability, their needs, abilities and capabilities as active members in society. Through this training plan, the initiative can achieve its mission and vision.” “The initiative is putting all efforts to introduce the essential role for people with disability in the society. Hence, all potentials must be accommodated to include them fully in all different aspects of life. This is to accomplish Qatar National Vision 2030 which aims to empower people with disability and to increase their participation in society,” She added.

Manar Khalifa al-Muraikhi, Director of PR and Corporate Communications of Ooredoo Qatar, said: “Ooredoo is keen to partner with various leading institutions in Qatar in order to support and enhance the work of charities working nationwide. We needed to host Best Buddies to ensure our staff knew more about the importance of including people with disability and to help them to be active members in society. Ooredoo is an active employer of people with disability and we encourage other companies in Qatar to speak to Best Buddies and to host a workshop as well.”

The all new INFINITI QX50 arrives in the Middle East

The all new INFINITI QX50 is arriving in showrooms across the Middle East. Available from next week, the much-anticipated vehicle further advances INFINITI’s market-leading presence in the mid-size premium SUV segment.

According to the press release, all new QX50 has been created to fully meet the needs of today’s premium car buyers and their desire to own the latest masterpiece technology. The QX50 introduces what is possibly the most innovative internal combustion engine on the market. Considered by many industry observers, the holy grail of internal combustion engines, the company’s engineers succeeded in bringing the world’s first to the market for INFINITI with variable compression technology. The VC-Turbo engine delivers the strong and convincing performance of a V6 and the fuel economy of a 4-cylinder engine, transforming on demand and based on the input of the drivers. Instantly adapting to their needs, the VC-Turbo lets them harness the exhilarating performance of 268hp and 380Nm at 4,400rpm of torque.

The QX50 appeals to buyers who require the unique combination of interior space, power, efficiency, hand-crafted quality and modern design, along with effortless on-road performance: Markus Leithe, Managing Director of INFINITI Middle East, said, “The new INFINITI QX50 has been designed, engineered, and finished to complement human capability. Everything about QX50 is built to amplify the driver.”

He added, “From open-pore wood accents to tailored leather stitching, the sophisticated surfaces and driver-focused design of the QX50’s well-appointed cabin create a personal environment.”

Developed on an entirely new platform, the QX50 features the sophisticated and assuring INFINITI Intelligent All-Wheel Drive. Drive Assist technologies react instantaneously to critical driving situations, supporting the driver with a range of empowering ‘co-pilot’ features, and enabling them to always be in total control.

The aerodynamically efficient exterior remains true to that of the QX50 Concept and QX Sport Inspiration, bringing a fresh interpretation of INFINITI’s distinctive “Powerful Elegance” design language to the SUV segment.

Combining a confident SUV stance with intelligent packaging, and deep character lines with INFINITI signature design cues, the appearance of the QX50 highlights the influence of human artistry in the design process to emphasise the car’s premium quality. The unrivalled interior space, artistic application of high quality materials, and advanced craftsmanship make the cabin as welcoming and comfortable as it is flexible. Driver-centric, yet passenger-minded, the QX50 offers a package of technologies to enhance the driving experience, while a calm, connected and relaxing cabin features an asymmetric layout – designed to meet different needs of the driver and the passengers.

The new QX50 is available across the Middle East. Ultimate levels of comfort, design and technology can be found in the signature QX50 Autograph.
Electric bikes race ahead of city and state rules

By Elaine S. Povich

Odd Weller, a Republican state senator from Utah, loves to ride bikes on the roads, trails and byways of his home state, including through the picturesque Bryce Canyon. He’s had many road and mountain bikes over the years, including several that he’s crashed and five that were stolen. But at age 51 and sporting an artificial knee, Weller now loves his electric mountain bike the most. He uses his power-assist bicycle to help him climb Bryce Canyon’s hills. But until Weller successfully wrote legislation that took effect in 2016 that divides electric bikes into three classes, depending on their horsepower, and makes them subject to traffic laws that govern regular bicycles. The law also prohibits people under age 16 from driving the largest motorised bikes, called Class III, and allows local authorities to set rules for the electric bikes.

Earlier this year, the Utah Legislature passed a companion bill banning open alcohol containers from the electric bikes while in use. They had neglected that aspect with the first bill, Weller said, endangering about $7 million in federal highway funding. Nine other states have enacted similar laws — three just this year — including Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Tennessee and Washington, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Another 20 states have some laws that apply widely, but unevenly, to electric bikes. The rest have no e-bike laws at all.

Technology has gotten ahead of regulation, said John MacArthur, a transportation researcher at Portland State University. “Every state puts out regulations around motorised devices,” he said, “but some states have had regulations on the books that are appropriate in describing the bikes, while some are using antiquated definitions.”

Those, he said, include laws that describe gasoline-powered motors — an outdated definition since the new e-bikes use rechargeable motors.

MacArthur pointed to New York City as a “classic example” of a place where outdated rules are impeding electric bike use. In October, Democratic New York Mayor Bill Dellias announced a crackdown on electric bikes under a city law that classifies them as motorised scooters, which are not street legal.

Food delivery workers often use e-bikes to carry pizza, Chinese food and other meals, but police officers started handing out fines as high as $500 — which is sometimes equal to the workers’ weekly salary.

New York City councilman Rafael Espinal said he’s readying legislation that would legalise e-bikes in the city. It is discriminatory to fine the city’s delivery people, most of them minorities, he said, for riding the electric bicycles to do their jobs.

MacArthur, the researcher, said e-bikes present the same safety issues as regular bikes: mostly “crashes and older people.” US research on electric bicycles is sparse, since they are so new, he said, but European researchers have reported older people falling over when they stop the heavier e-bikes because they aren’t used to riding them. “It’s not a crash speeding, it’s a crash standing.”

Studies have shown that e-bikes on average go between two and three miles per hour faster than conventional bikes, MacArthur said. “You have conventional bikes going faster than people on e-bikes, but you also have e-bikes going faster than people on conventional bikes,” he said. “I have ridden e-bikes where people pass me on the flats, I will pass people on hills.”

The debate over e-bike regulation has spilled over into similar conversations surrounding the recent trend of electric scooters zipping around cities.

Both modes of transportation have now been adopted by rent-by-the-hour companies, further complicating their regulation as cities also must grapple with where the bikes can be left (on the sidewalk or not), or whether they must be docked after use. Some people don’t like the scooters, so much so that they are setting them on fire, burying them in the sand or dumping them in the ocean, the Los Angeles Times reported. People haven’t turned on e-bikes in the same way.

Aside from those who use the electric bikes for work or commuting, many riders say e-bikes are fun for recreation.

In Utah, Weller said he uses an electric mountain bike on trails in Park City and Moab, but he has encountered officials and other riders who are hostile to the electric versions.

“It sounds like discrimination,” he said. “If you are fit enough to pedal up the hill, you can go, but electric bikes can’t. I’m not sure I’m OK with saying that every trail in a city can be pedal only.”

Cities are going to have to work out rules that accommodate all kinds of riders, he said. In addition, regular bike riders sometimes say to him, “We don’t want you up here,” as he rides his electric bike — a declaration he thinks is unfair. — Stateline.org/TNS
Grand Cayman provides a hassle-free tropical getaway. Scenery may be on a smaller scale than many of the other islands, Grand Cayman lacks the rugged mountains of neighbour Jamaica or the prolific rainforests of Dominica but its expansive Seven-Mile Beach is second to none. By Patti Nickell

I knew I was going to like Deserene Miller, also known as Miss D or Lady D when she picked me up at the Owen Roberts International Airport in George Town. A tiny bundle of energy with an ever-present fedora perched jauntily on her head; Miss D had been assigned as my driver and guide for the four days I was on the island. After about 15 minutes, her job description had expanded to driver/guide/friend. Over our four days together we did a lot of laughing and some serious sightseeing, taking in attractions from the Cayman Turtle Centre to the Blue Iguana Habitat; from Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park to the National Museum.

I had been to Grand Cayman once before, but only as an afternoon port-of-call on a cruise ship. For my shore excursion, I had opted for a trip to Stingray City, where donning fins and snorkel gear. I frolicked among large southern stingrays inhabiting a shallow sandbar. If I was willing to get close enough, I was told, I could leave with a stingray kiss imprinted on my palm or cheek. While it was quite an experience, it didn’t leave me with much knowledge of Grand Cayman aside from the canoodling Chordate cuties.

This time it was an entirely different story. I learned a lot about the island, most notably that if you are looking for a hassle-free tropical getaway, this is it. Grand Cayman is the largest of three islands that constitute the Cayman Islands along with Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. English is the official language; the US dollar is accepted everywhere; the economy is strong; crime almost non-existent, and the Caymanians are among the friendliest people in the Caribbean.

Scenery may be on a smaller scale than many of the other islands, Grand Cayman lacks the rugged mountains of neighbour Jamaica or the prolific rainforests of Dominica but its expansive Seven-Mile Beach is second to none.

Even more spectacular is what lies below the water’s surface. Known as a divers’ paradise, Grand Cayman has some of the best wall and drift dive sites in the world. Snorkellers have plenty of coves and reefs to explore, and even non-divers can experience the underwater splendour on an Atlantis Submarine Dive. They can watch schools of colourful fish and large turtles glide by their portals, while staying dry in the process. Grand Cayman’s reputation for world-class diving may be its main claim to fame, but there’s a lot to do on land as well. If you want to combine the island’s largest land-based attraction
assle-free tropical getaway

with an educational and cultural experience, a visit to the Cayman Turtle Centre is in order. The Centre was started in 1968 as a breeding and research facility for Green Sea Turtles and later, for the endangered Kemp’s Ridley Sea Turtles. Today, visitors can get a glimpse of newly hatched turtles in the nursery; hold the younger turtles and even swim with adult turtles in a lagoon setting.

While the prospect of up-close encounters with the turtles is appealing, the Centre is not without controversy. Various animal rights groups claim it is overcrowded and that constant handling of the turtles can cause them stress. Nevertheless, it remains one of Grand Cayman’s most popular visitor attractions.

If animal activists feel that the sea turtles would fare better in their natural environment, the exact opposite holds true for the blue iguana, a species found nowhere else in the world but Grand Cayman.

The iguanas’ natural habitat, forests, mangroves and shrublands have been deforested and developed to the point where the reptile has become endangered. The efforts of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution, have resulted in a nature reserve where the iguanas can live and breed.

Open for public tours, the Habitat gives visitors a chance to see these striking creatures ranging in colour from blue-gray to turquoise up close.

Adjacent to the Blue Iguana Habitat is the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park. Opened in 1994 by Her Majesty, the Queen, the park is a floral paradise, from a serene lake brimming with lily pads to displays of colourful tropical flowers.

Opened in 1994 by Her Majesty, the park is a floral paradise, from a serene lake brimming with lily pads to displays of colourful tropical flowers.

If you go to Grand Cayman Where to Stay: The Westin Grand Cayman. Located on Seven Mile Beach, this resort has it all: spacious guest rooms and suites with private balconies; lush landscaping with a free-form pool and two hot tubs; dining options ranging from the Beach House and Tortuga Grill to Ferdinand’s and T ortuga Grill to Ferdinand’s fine dining; the lobby Catboat Restaurant, and the Hibiscus Spa with its wide menu of treatments.

Where to Shop: If you’re looking for something a bit different from the usual cruise ship emporiums near the harbour, check out the trendy shops of Camana Bay. In addition, this waterfront village offers a dozen restaurants and bars; Farmers and Artisans Markets; dancing fountains, gardens and sculptures, and a year-round schedule of festivals and events. – Lexington Herald-Leader/TNS

FEATURES: The Cayman Islands National Museum has a number of interesting artefacts and exhibits educating visitors on all aspects of the islands, from sea turtle migrations to the fact that, unlike the rest of the Caribbean, no people lived here before the European colonisation.
ANTARCTICA IS THE COLDEST CONTINENT ON EARTH
THE AVERAGE TEMPERATURE IS 17°C COLDER THAN THE ARCTIC
The lowest temperature recorded here was -89°C

POLAR BEARS ARE RESIDENTS OF THE ARCTIC, NOT ANTARCTICA.
PENGUINS ARE NOT ON THEIR MENU.

IF ANTARCTICA’S ICE SHEET MELTS...
THE LEVEL OF THE WORLD’S OCEANS RISE BY AROUND 200FT
90% OF THE WORLD’S ICE
70% OF EARTH’S FRESH WATER
LAY SOLELY ON ANTARCTICA.

SIX SPECIES OF PENGUIN CAN BE FOUND ON ANTARCTICA, THE LARGEST BEING
THE EMPEROR PENGUIN
THEY MIGRATE TO ANTARCTICA DURING BREEDING SEASON

THE ONLY TERRESTRIAL SPECIES LIVING ON THE CONTINENT IS A MIDGE CALLED BELGICA ANTARCTICA
IT MEASURES LESS THAN HALF AN INCH LONG.
(It’s also the region’s only insect.)

LEOPARD SEALS HUNT PENGUINS, FISH, AS WELL AS SQUID AND KRILL.
Due to having no predators in Antarctica, they show no fear toward humans.

ANTARCTICA IS DIVIDED INTO TWO SEGMENTS, EAST AND WEST.
The segments are divided by a mountain range.
Keep nutrients in food intact

Raw foods are said to be the healthiest for the body as cooking through traditional methods such as frying or baking causes a significant nutrient loss. However, there are a few other methods through which you can enjoy your favourite foods while deriving considerable health benefits from them.

Yogesh Ghorpade, Founder and CEO of Uplodeodie and Aastha Jessica, Nutrition Expert at Momspresso list some tips on how one can keep the nutrition of food intact.

- Poaching is a great way of preparing fish, meat, eggs and fruit. Simmer food in a small amount of water in such a way that it retains its moisture and essential nutrients. As water does not add any fat to food, poaching is considered an extremely healthy cooking method.
- Blend instead of juicing. While juicing fruits and vegetables, you essentially remove all the fibrous material from the final product and are left with a rather sugary juice. Blending whole fruits and veggies keeps the pulp and fibre intact so you consume a thicker, more wholesome juice or smoothie.
- Don't peel. Most fruit and vegetable peels are rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. To keep maximum nutrients intact while cooking, it is, best to boil, grill or poach without peeling. However, you must ensure that fruits and vegetables are washed thoroughly to remove any dirt or grime.
- Grill to ensure the least amount of nutrient loss while making the fat drip off. The high heat from grilling seals in the moisture within food, so there is no additional butter or oil required to cook. Further, vegetables retain more vitamins and minerals through grilling.
- While boiling food, retain the cooking liquid for future use (like soups and stocks) as most of the nutrients leach out into the water during the boiling process. Use pots with lids while cooking (Pressure cooker is a better option).
- Do not store fruits and vegetables for a longer period of time, eat them as fresh as possible.
- Eat freshly cooked food and avoid re-heating it as it destroys the chemical structure of nutrients and makes them impotent.
- Wash vegetables and fruits before cutting and chopping them (never wash them after it is cut as the nutrients will drain into the water).
- Harmful enzymes are activated by high temperature, so it is best to cook food in a preheated pan or oven or in water that is already boiling.

ARIES
March 21 – April 19

You might find yourself thinking about a possible vacation. You’ve worked hard during the last few months and feel you deserve a break. This year you’re likely to want to do something different from the norm, perhaps travel to a foreign land associated with a great spiritual tradition. You should feel closer to your loved ones and optimistic about the future. Enjoy!

CANCER
June 21 – July 22

You generally are good at sizing up other people and sensing their thoughts and feelings. Cancer; but today that talent is greatly enhanced by increased intuition. You should be feeling especially enthusiastic and optimistic today. Both work and home life are likely to be looking good. Physically, you should be healthy and vigorous, and spiritually you should be strong. Enjoy your day.

LIBRA
September 23 – October 22

Normally you tend to view things on a logical, intellectual level. Libra, but today the strength of your intuition could surprise you. Your communications could be subtler than words. Today you’re probably feeling especially optimistic, enthusiastic, and very inspired by your circumstances. Continue on your path!

CAPRICORN
December 22 – January 19

During this time, you’ll feel especially intuitive, optimistic, and spiritually on a roll. You could feel artistically inspired. Capricorn, and channel some of your newfound awareness into recently started projects. Your relationships are probably going well. Your increased understanding of others’ needs makes you generous with sympathy or assistance where needed. Enjoy your day.

TAURUS
April 20 – May 20

Your health should be in top shape today, Taurus. You’re likely to feel physically, emotionally, and spiritually strong and ready to tap into your inner power. Dreams may make it possible to release old traumas and move ahead. An increased understanding of the needs and desires of others enriches your relationships. Take heart from past success, continue as you are, and enjoy your day.

LEO
July 23 – August 22

Communication with close friends and a romantic partner should be especially beneficial today. Leo, since you’re feeling more in touch with those close to you. Children could also be a source of joy today. Your creativity and inspiration are strong, so this is a great day to start new projects. Your enthusiasm and optimism should propel you to new achievements. Enjoy!

SAGITTARIUS
November 22 – December 21

This is a time when you’re likely to feel especially idealistic and hopeful. Spiritual experiences may have you on cloud nine. Sagittarius. Your intuition is also strong. You might consider taking a trip to a distant state or foreign country, perhaps one associated with a great spiritual tradition. Wait a day or two and talk it over with friends before making any arrangements.

GEMINI
May 21 – June 20

You’re good at dealing with others, but today you should be especially so. Your intuition is strong and you’re likely to instinctively understand others’ thoughts, feelings, needs, and desires. You give freely of your experience, knowledge, and understanding. This brings others closer to you, which can work for you on many levels. Social events may bring new friends.

SCORPIO
October 23 – November 21

Artistic talents are greatly increased by fresh, deeply felt inspiration. Today you may spend much of your time giving material form to your ideas. You’re intuitive by nature, but today your psychic gifts are operating at a high level. Don’t write off any insights you receive. Instead, write them down. Don’t forget to keep paper and pen next to your bed. You’ll want to remember your ideas and dreams later.

PISCES
February 19 – March 20

Some vivid and wonderful dreams might provide inspiration for future creative projects. You’re feeling cheerful and optimistic now, and your enthusiasm is likely to continue. Success in career and relationships is indicated. Your increased intuition heightens your understanding of others. Don’t be surprised if friends and colleagues line up for your support and guidance.
Wordsearch

N MO F P O E A D C O O K B
E P E M P L G G Y D N F M H A
S P N V O W N F E G C B U U L
D A V P S S O R N I S A V D B
N I W R A D C A M C U Y B S O
U O G L A T G N A C B E E O A
M S H G A I D K G U M L E N T
A E A S O M R L E P U N H I O
P M M B V T A I L S L A L N F
A A H V E H K N L E O T L B Z
N D U H I R E A A V C S O A V
S B D C N B I W N B P D I H G
O E Y S R E D N I L F D M I Y
T T T O C S W H G N E S S N A N
O F R O B I S H E R L I I H U

Explorers

AMUNDSEN  DIAZ  POLO
BALBOA  DRAKE  ROSS
BERING  FLINDERS  SCOTT
CABOT  FRANKLIN  SOTO
COLUMBUS  FROBISHER  STANLEY
COOK  HUDSON  TASMAN
DAGAMA  MAGELLAN  VESPUCCI
DARWIN  Nansen

Codeword

Every letter of the alphabet is used at least once. Squares with the same number in have the same letter in. Work out which number represents which letter.

Sudoku

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

Sudoku is a puzzle based on a 9x9 grid. The goal is to fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. The puzzles are divided into nine (3x3) boxes. You are given a selection of values and you must fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 exactly once.

Puzzles courtesy: Puzzlechoice.com

Garfield

WE SPEND TOO MUCH TIME STARING AT OUR PHONES. I’M PUTTING MINE DOWN!

THAT’S NICE

Bound And Gagged

MISSING SOCK

IT’S THE SAME OLD STORY. SARGE; STATIC ELECTRICITY.
Super Cryptic Clues

Across
1. That’s what you get if you’re a bad worker! (5,2,3)
6. Bound to be the whole apple core (4)
10. Allowed to enter, sees the holes (7)
11. Hers, packed, are put into the cutter (7)
12. Music you switch on? (5-4)
13. Between one thing and another, missing the start of the season (5)
14. The horse uncaught, the man returns (5)
15. Got lit, broke in brandishing toy gun. What’s the verdict? (3,6)
17. The lullaby-singing was successful and one stole away (9)
20. When the nun bumps into the man, make nothing of it (5)
21. Deign to return the jars, empty (5)
23. See it again in the stars about the woman who will deceive you (9)
25. Do its fumes annoy you? (7)
27. Shot, spin round (4)
28. How the cinemagoers discussed the cartoons? (10)

Down
1. Pull it off in your sleep, say (5)
2. Pays a call on and it proves to be enough (4,5)
3. Be an eye-witness and let things take their course (3,4,7)
4. Hang around so often, worriedly (7)
5. Understanding it will be where you can see it (7)
6. The bird you get flying about again (5)
8. Left the two names showing (9)
9. Is it trying hard not to laugh? (7,7)
14. Force to change position, as a temporary measure (9)
15. Like an ass, wanted very much to install an organ (4-5)
16. The man has a bird with him: a model (7)
18. Drawing the maid out about the rag that got out of hand (7)
19. Happen to have got double figures within forty-five minutes! (5)
24. Though off-colour, you note, docked a day (5)

Yesterday’s Solutions

Across: 1 First aid; 5 Edward; 10 Endless attempts; 11 Connive; 12 Arsenal; 13 Gangling; 15 Swift; 18 ‘Otter; 20 Satirist; 23 Sustain; 25 Cashier; 26 Down to the ground; 27 Riders; 28 Reverend.

Down: 1 Fleece; 2 Redund-ant; 3 Teeming; 4 Issue; 6 Dresses; 7 Aspen; 8 Desolate; 9 Straight; 14 Insanity; 16 Institute; 17 Consider; 19 Roaster; 21 Reserve; 22 Eroded; 24 Sawed; 25 Crete.
hey primped and we watched. HUM Style Awards is one of the biggest platforms nationwide, celebrating the local fashion aesthetics to a dime of details. What dress you wear, therefore, goes down in fashion history. Which actresses will land on the Best Dressed list and which will, sadly, find their photos designated as The Worst? Classic shapes or colours, silhouette or puffy trains, fearlessness with experimenting or classic sari choice, embellishments like sequins or lace or glitzy silk of thousand craftsmanship, was it really a statement appearance? Exclusive, lavish and highly crafted, couture creations belong to fashion enthusiasts and the red carpet. For some brands, the red carpet affords them an opportunity to showcase their craftsmanship and creativity; for others it might just be a platform to make headlines – in a good or a bad way! Fashion desk gives an insight to who wear what – effortlessly making a statement on the red carpet galore of HUM Style Awards 2018. While last year’s red carpet was all about delicate, sugary pastels, this year’s strongest trend was sparkle, bling and going bold.

Sanam Saeed
Body-accentuating silhouettes, ruffles, and gowns are trends that have one thing in common — when paired with one-shoulder styles they become instant winners. Don’t believe me? Check out how Sanam Saeed sported this look on the red carpet and you’d agree. Emerald green stripes with basic white that ended up with beautifully printed floral pattern by Shehla Chatoor is so on point. A wayward ruffled neckline strap, slipping wantonly down an ivory arm, caused an uproar. Ultra-sophisticated and radiance coming from east with this goddess!

Mawra Hocane
Instead of employing a smart mix of floor-length glamour with shimmer and sparkle, Mawra managed to pull off an impressively polished look in a traditional sari by Indian design house, Label D. Gota embellishments on the pallu complemented the rich chiffon sleeves that shimmered on stage. Where makeup had a cast of gold, the young actress paired her look with statement chandelier earrings that added oodles of glamour to her ensemble. Speaking volume of traditional heritage the sari draped in very Gujrati style. Here’s how you keep the wattage high in a very eastern and shimmery finish.

Ayesha Omar
Subtle, white and ruffles, Ayesha made a statement with a hemline and edgy cuts that allowed for some leg-flashing in Ahmad Kalia Couture. Bold white that hardly counted as a neutral but went on to the spectrum of sexy appeal to the couture silhouette, radiating gold flashing to detail as if the off shoulder gown made ruffles of flower petals, with gold as the intricate core. Where many celebrities use such ensembles as a feature to look romantic and others for a futuristic take, when such couture gown made its way to Pakistan entertainment industry, Ayesha Omar kept it white hot!

Saba Qamar
A muted colour and luxurious beading combined for a pretty look on Saba Qamar. Gloomy monsoon is all about dim lights, rain and deep colour combinations and Saba worked her ethereal gown perfectly. Delicacy gave way to decadent details, with bold embroidery adorning gown worn, all very Black Swan-esque, Saba rocked every inch of the look with no accessory mantra and sleek bunned hair. The perfect pattern play, detailing and cuts by Khadija Shah of Elan were all Hollywood perfect.

Aamina Sheikh
Style and fashion chameleon made a statement appearance after quite some time. She took the draped trend and lent it her style sensibility. No complex cuts, extra fabric and unwanted bulk. Wrapped but well-fitted bodice of Maheen Karim’s ensemble kept Aamina on trend. That’s true style!
Pressure of making Mowgli acceptable in India high: Freida

By Radhika Bhirani

For an audience that has grown up with the peppy and fun Jungle Jungle Patu chala hai... from a TV version of The Jungle Book, the creative team behind Andy Serkis' adventure fantasy film Mowgli is under pressure to make the movie acceptable in India with its darker theme, says actress Freida Pinto.

Based on Rudyard Kipling's widely read classic The Jungle Book, the film stars Rohan Chand, Matthew Rhys and Freida, along with voice and motion capture performances from Christian Bale, Cate Blanchett, Benedict Cumberbatch, Naomi Harris and Serkis.

In India ahead of the release of forthcoming film, Tabeer Noorani's Love Sonia, which delves into the dark world of child sex trafficking, Freida says there's not much she can tell about Mowgli as yet.

"All I can say is that there's a nice little surprise there for the Indian audience. It's a film that I am very proud of, and also because it's a story we all grew up on.

"What the makers of Mowgli have actually realised is that the pressure of making the film acceptable in India is definitely high because we grew up on that Jungle Jungle Patu chala hai (theme song)... But the film is definitely going to have to impress the Indian audience and I think they have just the right amount of creative mixture in that for doing so," Freida said.

Serkis has already made it clear that his version of the story is not a fairy tale, which is about human child Mowgli who is raised by a wolf pack in the jungles of India.

The movie, which will see Freida play Mowma, has been acquired by Netflix for release in 2019.

"Fingers crossed," said Freida, whose role as Latika in Danny Boyle's Oscar-winning Slumdog Millionaire opened the doors to international cinema not just for her, but for a whole lot of Indian talent.

"Slumdog Millionaire was the pioneer. The film opened people's eyes and gave them enough curiosity about India and the fact that it's so full of talent in every sphere. So, I first of all credit the film and not me for having opened the first bunch of doors.

"I had to blaze through whatever opportunity I was given, to create more opportunity for myself and in that way, create more opportunity for other actors." Ever since, she has collaborated with directors like Woody Allen, Michael Winterbottom, Rupert Wyatt and David O Russell on films that have appealed globally.

"As a person who was first out there in the West, I was like 'Oh my God, for people to accept me, I would have to be written as an American Indian or American woman; But now I look at it differently.

"I want to be accepted for what you see. And what you see in front of you is an Indian woman with brown skin, she's modern, she can transform herself into various characters and is an actor who has got enough credibility, so write roles with respect to that, as opposed to roles that need to be a white person.

"I am yet to see a film with an all-Indian ensemble cast. It has not happened yet, but we are getting there.

"They are showing us Indian storytellers and actors how it's done," Freida asserted.

She believes a project like Sacred Games is a "right move" to get the West to open up to stories from our part of the world.

"We have to be authentic. You can't want to be a white person in order to be accepted in the West. You have to be yourself.

"With Love Sonia, an India-set story about a global reality, the attempt is just that."
One man on mission to preserve rare ginseng

A ginseng species native to Vietnam has been given new life by an entrepreneur who plans to sustainably grow the rare plant with medicinal qualities and one day sell it at a reasonable rate. By Bennett Murray

Deep in the mountains of Vietnam’s Central Highlands, one man is on a mission to make sure a native strain of ginseng with potential medicinal qualities doesn’t go extinct. “It contains very precious genes we need to preserve,” Tran Hoan, Director of the Kon Tum Ngoc Linh Ginseng JS Company, says in a statement at his arboretum on the top of Ngoc Linh mountain.

“If this ginseng disappears, we will never have a chance to take it back.”

Hoan wants to grow Panax vietnemensis, a ginseng strain that grows only on Ngoc Linh Mountain, which straddles Kon Tum and Quang Nam provinces, nearly 2,600 metres above sea level.

Vietnam’s Agricultural Genetics Institute (AGI) said in a 2017 report that over-exploitation has pushed it to the verge of extinction. The ginseng branch sprouts annually in spring and withers in late summer before hibernating for the rest of the year. Each plant has only one bulb.

Past research conducted by Vietnam’s Health Ministry has found that the Ngoc Linh ginseng contains saponins - the main component in ginseng and widely considered to have health benefits - that have a structure not found in other types from Japan, Korea or the US.

“This is a special flora, among the most fragile of plants,” says Tran Cong Luan, Former Director of the Ho Chi Minh City Research Centre of Ginseng and Medicinal Materials, adding that it can grow only under a jungle canopy and near running water at altitudes above 1,200 metres.

“It has been listed as one of eight precious and endangered flora genes in Vietnam’s Red Book,” he adds, referring to a list created by the country of rare and endangered native species. Prized for its medicinal properties, the ginseng is also extremely expensive, fetching up to $5,000 per kilogram.

Hoan says he wants to change that. “I want to grow it, and one day, when I am sure about the sustainable development of this ginseng, I will supply it to the market at a reasonable price so all people have a chance to use it,” he says.

“People often tell me I am a weird businessman because I’m not selling my ginseng when the price is very high, but if I uproot them now to sell, I can’t expand the area,” he says. Hoan, who also owns rubber plantations, a goat farm and a construction firm, first came to Ngoc Linh mountain in 1994.

“I contacted ethnic people, the Xe Dang, in this area and learned about the value of Ngoc Linh ginseng,” says Hoan, adding that he began to fear for the plant’s future. “I saw people trying to find it and I thought sooner or later it would become extinct, so I started reading many books about this plant and thought of growing it.”

Hoan began trying to grow the ginseng in 1997, but the project did not work out. However, after more than 20 years of experimentation, with the help of a biologist brought in from Ho Chi Minh City, the project is showing promise.

He says he currently has around 4 million plants covering 400 hectares, but he is not selling them yet, as he wants to use the seedlings to cover all 4,600 hectares of his land. He has already successfully cultivated seedlings in preparation for this expansion.

The project also helps preserve the forest, as the ginseng requires canopy cover to grow. “Since Ngoc Linh ginseng can only grow and develops naturally in rubber forests. My top priority is protecting the forest,” Hoan says.

A 37-year-old Vietnamese Party boss in the commune, one of the sites of the ginseng crops, confirms that Hoan’s work is good for the forest.

“If Hanoi did not grow Ngoc Linh ginseng here, these virgin forests wouldn’t exist,” he says, adding that Hanoi, which employs 300 people, has also provided an alternative to illegal logging for the locals. “Our lives have been improved. We have televisions, motorbikes, and the most important thing is that people have stopped deforesting for farming,” he adds.

The operation is not cheap - Hoan estimates that he spends $700,000 a month to keep it going. As he continuously uses his plants to seed more ginseng instead of selling them, he is...