Coral project
Scientists race to save Florida Reef from killer disease. P4-5

A monster movie full of plot holes. Page 14

Anubhav Sinha's Article 15 faces Brahmin ire in UP. Page 15
**PRAYER TIME**

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| Ministry of Health                              | 40253370, 40253364, 40253365 |
| Hamad Medical Corporation                       | 40253364, 40253365             |
| Qatar Airways                                  | 40253374             |

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**Godzilla: King of the Monsters**

**DIRECTION:** Michael Dougherty  
**CAST:** Kyle Chandler, Vera Farmiga, Millie Bobby Brown  
**SYNOPSIS:** Members of the crypto-zoological agency Monarch face off against a battery of god-sized monsters, including the mighty Godzilla, who collides with Mothra, Rodan, and his ultimate nemesis, the three-headed King Ghidorah. When these ancient super-species—thought to be mere myths—rise again, they all vie for supremacy, leaving humanity’s very existence hanging in the balance.

**THEATRES:** The Mall, Landmark, Royal Plaza

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**X-Men: Dark Phoenix**

**DIRECTION:** Simon Kinberg  
**CAST:** James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence  
**SYNOPSIS:** This is the story of one of the X-Men’s most beloved characters, Jean Grey, as she evolves into the iconic ‘Dark Phoenix’. During a life-threatening rescue mission in space, Jean is hit by a cosmic force that transforms her into one of the most powerful mutants of all. Wrestling with this increasingly unstable power as well as her own personal demons, Jean spirals out of control, tearing the X-Men family apart and threatening to destroy the very fabric of our planet.

**THEATRES:** The Mall, Landmark, Royal Plaza

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**Quote Unquote**

“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.” — Colin Powell

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Community Editor  
Kamran Rehmat  
*e-mail:* community@gulf-times.com  
*Telephone:* 44466405  
*Fax:* 44350474
India to Qatar – Symbiosis of Cultures
WHERE: FBQ Museum
WHEN: Ongoing till July 31
Under the context of cultural exchange, FBQ Museum brings together the treasures of the museum owned collection in order to promote mutual understanding, recognition and appreciation between Qatar and India. Composed of five main topics, including community, trade, arts, food and incense, the exhibition takes one on a journey to explore the rich and diverse Indian cultures, the long historic links between Qatar and India, and cultural similarities between Qatar and India.

A Choral Kaleidoscope Concert
WHERE: Swiss International School
WHEN: June 13
TIME: 7pm onwards
Featuring Qatar Youth Choir and Qatar Junior Choir – their last concert of the season. Qatar Youth Choir has recently returned from workshops and concerts with the Vienna Boys Choir in Austria. Qatar Junior Choir will perform their concert programme in September. Tickets are available from choir members or on the door for QBR0.

ISC Skipping Rope Open Championship
WHERE: Ashoka Hall, ICC
WHEN: June 15
TIME: 11.00am – 1:30pm
Indian Sports Centre under the patronage of Embassy of India is organising Third edition of ISC Skipping Rope Open Championship - 2019 for Speed Hop and Speed Endurance competitions. Categories include Under –12 (Boys and Girls), Under –18 (Boys and Girls) and Adults (Men and Women) - Above 18 years. Entry is free. Championship is open to all Indians and students of any nationality studying in Indian Schools. Last date of entry is June 11. For further details, yoga.iscdoha@gmail.com or 55824194/55956008.

Ballet Lessons
WHERE: Music and Arts Atelier
WHEN: Ongoing
TIME: 4pm – 8pm
For more info e-mail at registration@atelierqatar.com or call on 33003839.

Career Guidance
WHERE: Right Track Consultants, Al Sadd
WHEN: Sunday – Thursday
TIME: 6pm – 8pm
Career guidance for course, country, college and entrance for students of Grade IX-XII, of all curriculum. Career assessments administered for stream preference, career test, branch preference, personality, multiple intelligence and learning styles and productivity. For more information, 55448835.

Summer Camp for Special Needs
WHERE: Step by Step Centre for Special Needs
WHEN: June 30 – August 1
TIME: 8:00am – 12:30pm
During this time, all therapists and teachers will be working together, running individual, peer and group sessions within classes. The children will continue learning age-appropriate concepts, work on social skills, life skills training, arts and crafts, music, and fun activities such as water play.

Artistic Gymnastic Classes
WHERE: Qatar Academy Msheireb
WHEN: Ongoing
TIME: 3:15pm – 4:15pm
The olympic sport using horizontal bar, rings and floor exercises on mats for the children from age 4 till 16.

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 66523871/31326749.
Scientists to the fore

The operation is part of a mission to save corals from extinction as a mysterious disease ravages mile after mile of the Florida Reef Tract, writes Adriana Brasileiro.

"The whole point of this project and of our work here is to make sure we get the best possible specimens of different species, because they will provide new individuals to be transplanted."

— Kyle Pisano, NSU coral nursery caretaker
n a sunny afternoon in Dania Beach, a dozen scientists unloaded crates full of corals from a dive boat and onto a pickup truck. They gently removed each piece from large tanks on the deck and placed them inside smaller containers, which were slowly taken onshore.

The operation is part of what scientists describe as a "Noah's Ark" mission to save corals from extinction as a mysterious disease ravages mile after mile of the Florida Reef Tract. Since first being spotted in 2014, the disease has killed colonies already weakened by impacts from climate change, including frequent rounds of bleaching and rising ocean acidification.

During one trip earlier this month, researchers spent six days diving in the Lower Keys to collect corals that haven't yet been touched by the epidemic of what is called stony coral tissue loss disease. Their mission, as the "Ark" reference suggests, is to preserve healthy examples of species that can be cultivated in labs, then later transplanted back to the barrier reef that parallels much of the Southeast Florida coastline.

"It's a Herculean effort, but we need to do everything we can to help corals survive," said Richard Dodge, dean of Nova Southeastern University's Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography, as he watched university staff and volunteers place the 341 corals in holding tanks on the university dock across from Port Everglades.

NSU is one of seven research facilities that will act as temporary hosts for specimens collected for what is formally known as the Coral Rescue Collection Plan, part of an ambitious programme led by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. NSU researchers will collect data on the species, then send them to other universities and zoos across the country, where they will be used to grow new colonies — seed stock for potential restoration efforts in the future.

The challenges to the survival of Florida's reefs are immense. More than half of the corals have disappeared over the past 250 years, hammered by development, pollution, boat anchors and grounds, frequent bleaching events and, recently, climate change. Warmer sea temperatures, sea level rise and changes in storm intensity are all concerns, but the out-of-control stony coral tissue loss outbreak in recent years brought new urgency to coral rescue efforts.

If Florida's reefs disappear, it would wipe out economically valuable destinations that draw boaters and divers but that are even more important to the biological health of South Florida's offshore waters. Coral reefs create habitats that provide shelter and food for hundreds of species, from fishes to lobster. The reef also serves as a buffer that protects coastal areas against hurricanes and storm surge.

Growing corals in a lab or even in offshore gardens isn't new. But recovery programmes like the one NSU has joined are getting more sophisticated as threats intensify. Most previous work has focused on the large branching corals that have nearly vanished from South Florida waters — the critically endangered staghorn and elkhorn corals. This programme expands restoration efforts, targeting species that are more susceptible to the disease and die faster or those that have higher coral-building capacity, which would speed restoration.

During the journey from the southern Keys to NSU's coral nursery, everything was meticulously controlled to prevent even a trace of disease from tainting the specimens. Only the strong will survive and, hopefully, guarantee a pool of genetic wealth to regrow more colonies in the future.

Though some corals may look like rock formations, they are very fragile and require a lot of care and control. The variety of corals in NSU's precious collection from the Keys was surprising: Some resembled small flower arrangements while others looked like images of the emerald-g�� Irish countryside seen from above.

Removing them from the ocean is a challenging balance of strength and delicacy: Diver scientists used longreels and hammer to chip at spaces between the coral and the structure where it grows until it pops out. At the NSU nursery, marine biologists worked methodically to give the corals the best chance of survival, dipping each piece in a solution of antibiotics and vitamins, rinsing them off and whisking them away to designated tanks.

"In these first days bringing them from their homes in the ocean and moving them to our tanks, they may experience some stress, so we need to avoid that at all costs," said Nick Turner, research assistant and a lab manager at NSU.

And it's not easy to keep corals happy under the ocean. Light and water conditions need to be constantly monitored, with the right level of nutrients to guarantee their survival at NSU's coral nursery. The area is covered with light beige cloth to simulate the dimmer sunlight that reaches corals in their natural habitat, about 20 feet below the surface.

Kyle Pisano, the university's self-described coral nanny, said the hard work is worth it. His job is not only to make sure the corals survive the transition from NSU's holding tanks to their next stops in the rescue project, but also that they are healthy enough to reproduce.

"The whole point of this project and of our work here is to make sure we get the best possible specimens of different species, because they will provide new individuals to be transplanted," Pisano said.

Scientists know they are racing against time against a disease they don't know yet much about. What's causing it? No-one can even say yet.

"We are trying to stop it, and at the same time we are working to make sure we can at least restore some of the colonies," Dodge said.

— The Miami Herald/TNS
NRNA-NCC marks Eid al-Fitr celebrations

Non-Resident Nepali Association-National Co-ordination Committee (NRNA-NCC) recently organised an event to mark Eid al-Fitr celebrations at Asian Town. Laxman Khanal, Charge de Affairs at the Embassy of Nepal, was the chief guest at the event. Speaking on the occasion, Laxman said that events of this nature strengthen the ties of brotherhood between Nepal and Qatar. Various community leaders, including R K Sharma, Bill Bahadur Gurung, Kumar Karki, Brind Shattara and Binesh Tamang also spoke on the occasion. The event was chaired by Nabin Pokharel, Chairman of NRNA-NCC. Tej Katuwa, Vice Chairman of NRNA-NCC, welcomed the gathering.

– Text and photo by Usha Wagle Gautam

EID GREETINGS: The members of Hyderabadis in Qatar (HIQ) Community Group recently gathered at Imam Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab Mosque to wish each other the blessings of Eid al-Fitr.

Syed Rafi, Chairman of HIQ Community Group, thanked all the people who gathered and wished them a blessed Eid.

Special Eid al-Fitr offers from the Westin Doha Hotel & Spa

The Westin Doha Hotel and Spa has recently announced its exclusive Eid offers for families and travelers looking for a comfortable break to embrace the festive occasion, stated a press release. The Westin is inviting both Doha residents and visitors from across the region to make the most of their vacation with an attractive deal. Families can book one room and get the second room offered at 50% off for kids up to 21 years. Also, children under 12 can enjoy their meals complimentary throughout the hotel venues.

In addition, Heavenly Spa is offering for those looking to spend a relaxing and serene getaway from the city, an attractive Eid offer where they can book a spa treatment until June 3rd and get 30% off.

Ammar Samad, Hotel Manager at The Westin Doha Hotel & Spa, said, “We are thrilled to share the spirit of Eid with all our guests. It is important to spend quality time with families, friends and loved ones and embrace the special moments together.”

He added, “Our rooms are generously sized starting at 46sq m. In addition, the extensive recreation facilities and lush green gardens allow families to spend the most beautiful moments with their loved ones in a relaxing atmosphere.”
Best ways to navigate, from high tech to low

Two travel experts offer suggestions to make your travels more fun and less fraught, but keep this in mind: No system is perfect; if your goal is never to be lost, you might want to dial back your expectations, writes Catherine Hamm

USEFUL: For those who lack sense of direction, becoming familiar with where the landmarks are on a map can help make the unfamiliar less so.

Question: I am getting ready to spend a couple of months in Scotland, England and Ireland and wonder whether you have any advice or information on the best ways to navigate on this trip.

Answer: Renting a car and hitting the high roads of Britain and Ireland brings with it some freedoms but also some complications.

Two travel experts offer suggestions to make your travels more fun and less fraught, but keep this in mind: No system is perfect; if your goal is never to be lost, you might want to dial back your expectations, writes Catherine Hamm.

Con: If your rental car company incorporates the use of a navigation system as part of your rental agreement, there may be additional fees for using it.

Pro: A navigation system can help you avoid getting lost, especially in unfamiliar areas.

If you lose your cell signal, your maps won’t update or will do the digital equivalent of dithering. Make a wrong turn and you’ll be rerouted.

A paper map

Pro: Relies on nothing but your good sense.

Con: Relies on nothing but your good sense.

Smith and Abramson learned to read maps when they were children and became the family navigators. Both suggest getting the lay of the land from a map and studying the anomalies of the road.

Smith noted that studying maps could, for instance, steer you away from toll roads in the US, important if your rental car company automatically charges for them and tacks on a fee, or differentiating between high and low roads in Scotland.

For those who lack sense of direction, becoming familiar with where the landmarks are on a map can help make the unfamiliar less so.

For help on learning to read a map, check out YouTube as well as lesson plans from the National Education Association and National Geographic.

On a car trip in Ireland two summers ago, I found the best way to ensure we were never lost: We hired a driver, which was far less expensive than we thought. And the idea of travelling in a private car without screaming fights about whose fault it was we were lost? Priceless. – Los Angeles Times/ TNS
Six security tips before moving into a senior-living community

There’s a rising concern for older people moving to old-living communities and family members who are helping with that transition, writes Charles Scudder

When making plans for Ventana by Buckner, a luxury retirement community slated to open this fall in North Dallas, security was top of mind for executive director Rick Pruett. But after authorities indicted Billy Chemirmir on 11 capital murder charges in Dallas and Collin counties, Pruett said, he’s training his team to make sure the facility’s security was strong enough.

“The best security plan I’ve learned about has to be one that’s always evolving,” he said. “I’ve seen things come to a place in the last few years that (security) has been more prevalent. … That is such a culture shift.”

According to police and court records, Chemirmir posed as a maintenance or healthcare worker to gain access to Dallas, Frisco and Plano retirement facilities and targeted women at their private homes in Dallas and Collin counties in 2018. He also targeted women at maintenance or healthcare worker positions at Frisco and Plano retirement facilities.

Chemirmir has denied jailhouse misconduct claims in Dallas and Collin counties, according to the indictments. Police say he smothered his 91-year-old resident in Dallas and claimed to be a maintenance man for the facility. In another attempted slaying at a Frisco retirement living complex in which Chemirmir is suspected, police said he claimed to be a maintenance man for the facility. When a 91-year-old resident said she didn’t need any work done, police said, Chemirmir shoved her from her walker to the floor and tried to suffocate her.

“Cameras in facilities can deter abuse,” she said. However, Prueitt said it’s important to be sure that the resident knows when and how cameras are used in order to give them privacy if needed. And in some nursing home settings, she said, it’s important to talk to potential roommates about camera usage.

Suffstede noted that some communities may have individual locks on residents’ units, although nurses or other staff may have keys for emergencies.

Use a security camera

Residents are allowed to have a camera in their personal space, Suffstede said, and they have the right to record interactions with staff and other caregivers.

“Cameras in facilities can deter abuse,” she said. However, Suffstede said it’s important to be sure that the resident knows when and how cameras are used in order to give them privacy if needed. And in some nursing home settings, she said, it’s important to talk to potential roommates about camera usage.

Suffstede noted that some facilities have shorter staffing at night and at times may not have someone at the front desk to check in visitors. It's important, therefore, for families to know what kind of security is offered at different times of day and night.

Do your research

Nursing homes and other long-term care facilities must register with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and are subject to regular inspections.

Dawson also suggested using public data to see what kind of crimes and calls for service have been reported in the neighborhood. On communityriskmap.com, for example, you can pull up recent crime reports for a neighborhood.

Ask questions

When touring a facility, it’s important for both the person moving in and his or her family to ask lots of questions about security.

Experts also suggest talking to current residents or their families to get another perspective of what a community is like.

“We find our need for security is part of our user experience,” Pruett said.

Pruett suggested asking questions about what emergency plans are in place. Any employee should know the basics of a facility’s preparedness plan, he said.

Pruett said he is training his employees at Ventana by Buckner to be alert and to acknowledge visitors to help prevent security issues. To do that, he said, he encourages employees to make eye contact with and talk to visitors to quickly determine whether they should be on the premises.

If someone comes knocking, verify

In one attempted slaying at a Frisco retirement living complex in which Chemirmir is suspected, police said he claimed to be a maintenance man for the facility. When a 91-year-old resident said she didn’t need any work done, police said, Chemirmir shoved her from her walker to the floor and tried to suffocate her.

Dawson said it’s important to verify the identity of anyone who comes to the door, and to not automatically open the door if there’s an unexpected knock.

“You’ve got to ask yourself, ‘Did I call for a pizza?’ or ‘Did I call the police?’” Dawson said. “We try to tell people if your gut tells you something might be wrong, it probably is.”

If someone claims to work for a facility, for example, call the front desk to double-check that the visitor is supposed to be there.

“You have to have a mindset like you can’t trust people like you used to,” Dawson said. – The Dallas Morning News/TNS

VARYING LEVELS OF SECURITY

Security may also vary by level of care. For example, independent living complexes may have individual locks on residents’ units, although nurses or other staff may have keys for emergencies.
150 years of the Vienna State Opera

The history of the Vienna State Opera, a national institution, is full of interesting stories. This year, the art is meant to speak for itself, writes Matthias Roeder.

Vienna State Opera music director Karl Bohm was defiant when he returned to the Austrian capital in 1956 after a five-week break – time away that some had criticised as too long. 

“I am not prepared to sacrifice my international career to the Vienna State Opera,” Bohm said into a reporter’s microphone at the airport.

During a performance of Beethoven’s Fidelio at the world-famous opera house not long afterwards, the audience countered his defiant attitude with their own, making their displeasure about his absence known.

“Boos and whistles resounded from the galleries to the stalls; the sound of an audience’s rage,” the Bild-Zeitung newspaper reported in March that year.

The director had to go. He was succeeded by Herbert von Karajan, who elevated the opera house to the international star names he brought in.

The history of the Vienna State Opera, a national institution, is full of stories like this. The opera house celebrates its 150th birthday in 2019, of stories like this. The opera house is considered to have the largest repertoire in the world. Meyer and his team have 120 musical works and 62 ballets at their disposal.

If a singer pulls out of a performance, the company has the equipment for three emergency operas on hand: Tosca, L’élisir d’amore and Don Pasquale.

“If there’s an emergency at midday, we can put on these three pieces at 7pm,” says Peter Kozak, technical director.

The mammoth achievement of bringing 55 operas and 10 ballets to the stage in the current season also requires the skills of 340 technical staff. These include upholsterers, carpenters, painters, locksmiths and even a rope maker, says Herbert Krammer from the technical team.

“If the economy is doing very well, then we get very bad people,” he says, referring to the often unattractive working hours.

The latest scandal to rock the opera house concerned its inhouse ballet academy. A teacher, who has since been dismissed, was accused of harassing and abusing students. Humiliation, violence and intimidation are said to have been rife under her leadership.

What is undisputed, however, is the appeal of the company’s dancers: Their performances have an attendance rate of 99.88 percent – higher, even, than the operas’ rate of 99.37 percent.

A performance of Swan Lake in 1964 even put the company in the Guinness Book of Records after the ecstatic audience demanded 89 curtain calls.

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The company’s decision to stage a world premiere in 2018 after an eight-year hiatus was met with mixed reviews. Die Weiden by Johannes Maria Staud was supposed to address the threat to democracy posed by right-wing extremist and populist movements, but it was accused of containing too many clichés.

The Vienna State Opera is no stranger to criticism. By the time the building opened on May 25, 1869, its two architects – August Sicard von Sicardsburg and Eduard van der Nuell – were already dead. Van der Nuell committed suicide, unable to bear the public criticism of the building. The streets around the house were one metre higher than originally planned and had given the new building the derogatory nickname ‘the sunken box’. His co-architect died not long afterwards of a lung illness.

Legend has it that Emperor Franz Joseph I, one of the building’s sharpest critics, denounced his acerbic commentary as a result of their deaths, henceforth resorting to the inoffensive catchphrase: “It was very beautiful, I was very happy about it.” – DPA
MANAGING ARTHRITIS: STRIVE FOR FIVE

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR
Talk to your doctor if you have joint pain or other arthritis symptoms.

It’s important to get an accurate diagnosis as soon as possible so you can start treatment and work to minimize arthritis pain.

MANAGE YOUR WEIGHT
Losing excess weight and staying at a healthy weight is particularly important for people with arthritis.

Losing weight, if needed, reduces stress on weight bearing joints like the hips and knees.

BE ACTIVE
Physical activity is a simple and effective way to relieve arthritis pain without medication.

Being physically active also improves function, mood, and quality of life for adults with arthritis.

LEARN NEW SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS
Join a self-management education workshop, which can help you learn the skills to manage your arthritis and make good decisions about your health.

PROTECT YOUR JOINTS
Joint injuries can cause or worsen arthritis.

Choose activities that are easy on the joints like walking, bicycling, and swimming.

These activities are low risk and do not put too much stress on the joints.
Here's how you can protect coloured hair from summer sun

People with coloured hair need to take extra care during summer as there is a possibility of the hair fading faster, says experts.

Here are a few tips by Sameer Hamdare - Technical Manager, Streax Professional, and Shuba Dharmana, dermatologist, Lejeune Medspa, Bengaluru, for coloured hair during summer:

- Choose hair care products made especially for colour treated hair eg. colour safe shampoo and conditioner, use serum or live-in conditioner with SPF and UV protection specially for coloured hair.
- Try to avoid exposing your hair to direct sunlight as much as possible as it may fade your hair colour. You can cover it up with a cool scarf or a cap.
- Also use a wide-tooth comb to avoid breakage.
- If you have colour-treated hair or chemically processed damaged hair, a sulphate free shampoo is a lot gentler. Curly, frizzy hair retains a lot more moisture with a sulphate free shampoo. Other shampoos that have sulphates can strip the hair and scalp of its natural oils and make it dry.
- If you have dry, flaky scalp opt for regular hot oil massages. Leave the oil in for 40 minutes and wash off.
- Eat iron and calcium rich foods. Ensure you are eating enough protein.
- Minimise stress. Get a good eight hours sleep every day.

- Technical Manager, Streax Professional,

~ IANS
Wordsearch

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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.

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Puzzles courtesy: Puzzlechoice.com
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Sudoku

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Sudoku is a puzzle based on a 9x9 grid. The puzzle is divided into nine 3x3 blocks. You are given a selection of values and to complete the puzzle, you must fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 block contain all the digits 1 to 9.

Codeword

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Sudoku Book

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Bound And Gagged

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Puzzles courtesy: Puzzlechoice.com
Super Cryptic Clues

Across
1 Do some decorating, having returned book (9)
8 Children meditate moodily (5)
9 Alfresco eat? (7)
10 Wet weather keeps artist at home (4)
11 Often rue funny figure (8)
13 Desert a painter has seen when retiring (6)
11 Often rue funny figure (8)
22 Sound of bird caught by Dickensian villain (5)
23 New Year tends to make us inactive (9)

Down
2 Scrap iron finally extracted from odd hobnails (7)
3 Doesn’t go on producing goals (4)
4 Express one’s displeasure, repeating error (3-3)
5 Food-suppliers supplying terraces? (8)
6 Opening pronounced intact (4)
7 Mark and Pansy turned up for a biscuit (6,4)
8 Ban plaster cast in West Country town (10)
12 Show a third of retailers in the money (8)
15 Were any crackers in time for festivity? (3,4)
16 Clear the bed, giving doctor advantage (6)
18 A bill for the magistrate (4)
20 Glaswegian, for example, in small bed (4)

Yesterday’s Solutions

Wordsearch

Codeword
A monster movie full of plot holes

By Rick Bentley

Summarising the quality of Godzilla: King of the Monsters is simple: This Godzilla is god awful. This latest big-screen tale of Godzilla features writing that has more holes than a 90-year-old pair of socks, acting that ranges from comedic to sad and a look that is so dark it is like trying to watch the quick-cut editing style of a Michael Bay Transformers movie shot using a 15-watt light bulb as illumination.

What painfully tries to pass as the story is the efforts of the crypto-zoological agency Monarch to deal with a bevy of new creatures – including Mothra, Rodan and the three-headed King Ghidorah – who have awakened. The start of the total annihilation of the human population means only Godzilla can save the day. And that leads to an endless stream of giant creatures battling on the land, in the sea and in the air.

The fights are probably interesting but there’s not a single showdown that doesn’t take place either at night, under a cloud of volcanic ash or in a rainstorm so intense there should be people building an ark. This super dark and intense there should be people building an ark. This super dark and intense there should be people building an ark.

Godzilla is god awful. This latest big-screen tale of Godzilla features writing that has more holes than a 90-year-old pair of socks, acting that ranges from comedic to sad and a look that is so dark it is like trying to watch the quick-cut editing style of a Michael Bay Transformers movie shot using a 15-watt light bulb as illumination.

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The fights are probably interesting but there’s not a single showdown that doesn’t take place either at night, under a cloud of volcanic ash or in a rainstorm so intense there should be people building an ark. This super dark way of shooting helps hide the special effects flaws but it also makes it impossible to know which creature is winning. At least in Kong: Skull Island there were enough scenes in the bright sunlight to be able to get a look at the great ape.

There’s no way to discuss the logic that sets events in motion because the explanation in the movie makes no sense. There are some good people working with bad people to do good things; they might be bad and so the good people aren’t sure if they really are good or just being bad. It’s not surprising that the plot is so full of plot holes because every moment is either an illogical leap or a complete disregard for the laws of physics.

Granted, this is a monster movie and certain leeway has to be given. That was a lot easier when the Godzilla franchise launched in the mid-’50s. The franchise didn’t become popular because it took the world of a giant lizard seriously but because the projects were simple. The approach was so outlandish, anything was acceptable.

The new Godzilla movies are treated so seriously it is as if they are contending for Oscars and that means there is far less room for moments that are just obviously idiotic beyond measure. Note that there is a spoiler coming so skip the next paragraph if you are still under the delusion of wanting to see this movie.

To help an injured Godzilla, a submarine crew finds his secret underwater lair. It is so hot from lava and radiation, the vessel can’t get close enough to set off the nuclear bomb that will recharge Godzilla. But a one-man sub can reach Godzilla and the pilot can walk to just under the nose of Godzilla to set off the bomb. Either the person should have died from exposure long before the trip or the blast – set off 10-feet from Godzilla’s snout – should have turned Godzilla into lizzard soup. This is just one example of endless dumb moments in the hackneyed script.

As if that weren’t enough, even more aggravating is that director Michael Dougherty tries to tie this movie to the 2014 feature Godzilla by tricking the audience into thinking the central characters in the new film were a big part of that effort. The 2014 film focused on the characters played by Aaron-Taylor Johnson and Elizabeth Olsen but the actors (a must move on their part) are nowhere to be found in this film.

Dougherty expects audiences to accept that the family drama at the core of King of the Monsters surrounding the characters played by Kyle Chandler and Vera Farmiga were the link. The only connection is a 90-second scene at the beginning. The script by Dougherty and Zach Shields takes off as if the history of these players had been established before when in reality they are never established in any form. That means when major decisions are made by this couple (REALLY major decisions), there’s no framework to understand the actions other than a tragedy in their life.

Chandler and Farmiga do their best but both are faced with being locked in a melodrama with nowhere to go but down. The good news is the film is so dark, most of their performances can’t be seen. The only good thing that can be said is that Godzilla: King of the Monsters has accomplished the impossible. It makes all of those cheesy productions of the ’50s and ’60s look like science fiction masterpieces. – TNS

A biggest dud of X-Men franchise

By Katie Walsh

You wouldn’t like Jean Grey when she’s angry. But there’s not much to like about Dark Phoenix at all. While the long-running, time-scrambling Fox X-Men franchise has been showing diminishing returns since X-Men: Apocalypse, Dark Phoenix, the directorial debut of writer Simon Kinberg, is the dud of all duds, a boring, flat film that doesn’t seem to even care to lift itself over. With this final instalment, the franchise goes out with a resounding thud.

If you’re not familiar with Jean Grey, played here by Sophie Turner, and previously by Famke Janssen, we get to know her tragic backstory in Dark Phoenix. As a young mutant, she has a hard time controlling her incredibly powerful telekinetic and psychic abilities. She causes a car accident, killing her parents, and is taken under the wing of Charles Xavier (James McAvoy), who becomes her de facto father figure and teaches her how to control her gift. But during an attempt to rescue astronauts from the Space Shuttle Endeavour in 1992 (yup), Jean ends up absorbing a direct hit from a solar flare of sorts. She survives, but her powers are even more acute. And she has a hard time controlling things when she’s emotional, especially since this cosmic incident ripped the Band-Aids off all the childhood trauma she’s repressed.

For Game of Thrones fans, it is tempting to imagine Turner as the all-powerful being she deserves to be. But with its incredibly chunky and obvious script, Dark Phoenix just doesn’t do Turner justice. For an actress who can cut precision daggers with a sideways glance, Kinberg asks her to be a sledgehammer, requiring her to shout every emotional beat and turn, relentlessly hammering the themes and messaging. “My emotions make me strong!” Jean declares to a white-haired alien succubus played by Jessica Chastain, indicating that apparently Brene Brown rakes up a rap sheet of offences (it doesn’t even look remotely like 1992!), but perhaps the worst is proving what X-Men: Apocalypse started in its treatment of Oscar Isaac. Despite the calibre and talent of the actor, lacklustre writing, directing and editing can warp a performance into something truly dreadful. Now that’s power. – TNS
Environmetalists: Robert Downey Jr sets up The Footprint Coalition to work for better environment

Downey Jr’s green steps to clean the world

Actor Robert Downey Jr. of Iron Man fame has announced the launch of a new organisation committed to using advanced technologies for the good of the environment.

“Between robotics and nanotechnology, we could clean up the planet significantly, if not totally, in 10 years,” Downey Jr. said, relaying that he had been given these insights a few weeks back by a roundtable of experts.

He was giving the opening keynote for Amazon’s Re: Mars conference here on Tuesday when he announced ‘The Footprint Coalition’. He said the group was scheduled to officially launch by April 2020, the variety reported

“God I love experts. They’re like Wikipedia with character defects,” he joked just like his popular character Tony Stark.

The announcement came at the end of a freewheeling talk about artificial intelligence, the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Downey Jr’s own career and the evolution of his Tony Stark character, which featured cameos from Amazon’s AI assistant Alexa, as well as Matt Damon, who joined via video. – IANS

Allen’s new film to go on floors in July

Director Woody Allen will shoot his 51st film in Spain this summer with a cast including actors Christoph Waltz and actress Gina Gershon.

According to production studio Mediapro, the untitled film, which was first announced in February, will be a “comedy-romance”, following a married American couple who attend the San Sebastian film festival only to fall in love with different people.

Filming is set to begin on July 10 in Spain, reports variety.com

“She has an affair with a brilliant French movie director, and he falls in love with a beautiful Spanish woman who lives there,” the studio confirmed in a statement.

“It is a comedy-romance that resolves itself in a funny but romantic way.”

Allen’s last film, A Rainy Day in New York, was shelved by Amazon after the renewed attention to the molestation allegations levelled against Allen by his daughter Dylan Farrow.

Allen denied the allegations. Several actors who worked with him in the past have said they would not be interested in working with him again.

A Rainy Day in New York will be released in several European territories. – IANS

Anubhav Sinha’s Article 15 faces Brahmin ire in UP

Anubhav Sinha’s much-awaited thriller Article 15 that is reportedly inspired from the Badaun murder case, seems to be heading for trouble.

The film, slated for a June 28 release, has earned the ire of the Brahmin community in Uttar Pradesh. Starring Ayushmann Khurana in the lead, the film has been shot and around Lucknow.

Brahmins are upset over the fact that the story has been “tweaked”. With the intention of portraying the accused men as Brahmins, they feel it will defame the community.

The trailer of the film, which was released last week, shows two young girls of a village harassed and murdered, their bodies hanging from a tree. It shows the girls – whose families are marginalised and forced to work as labourers – were targeted because they demanded a hike of Rs5 in their daily wages.

The film depicts how caste equations are prevalent in the area.

The trailer also mentions that the crime was committed by one ‘Mahantji ke ladke’, Mahantji is mentioned as a Brahmin of the highest order and this has upset the Brahmin community.

Scenes from the trailer show how the people in the area believe that the Dalits have no right to demand higher wages, and about status, only what the ‘upper caste’ deems fit for them.

Ayushmann Khurana, who plays the police officer investigating the case, is a Brahmin and deals with the caste complexities of the case.

The Badaun murder case took place in 2014 when the Akhilesh Yadav government was in power in Uttar Pradesh. The accused were named Pappu Yadav, Avadhesh Yadav, Urvesh Yadav, Chhatrapal Yadav and Sarvesh Yadav. Chhatrapal and Sarvesh were policemen. The Police Department was accused of showing leniency to the accused in the case due to political pressure from the Samajwadi Party which was favouring the Yadavs.

“If the film is based on the Badaun incident, where was the need to turn the accused into Brahmins? It is obvious that the intention is to malign the Brahmin community. We have started creating awareness about the issue and we will not allow the film to release here,” said Kushal Tiwari a young student leader, who is a member of the Parshuram Sena, a Brahmin outfit.

Tiwari said if Thakur can stall the release of Padmaavat, why can’t Brahmins fight for their honour in this film? “We are launching a campaign on the social media and we have also been trying to contact the film director Anubhav Singh but he has not been taking our calls,” he said.

He further said that while the film was being shot in Lucknow in March and April, they were not aware of the story line and hence did not protest.

Meanwhile, film director Anubhav Sinha could not be contacted but Manoj Pahwa, who plays an important role in the film, told a news agency: “The film is not completely based on the heinous crime that took place in Badaun where the two girls were hanged. This film is merely inspired by that incident and named as Article 15 which gives right to equality to all.” – IANS

Sabian slaps security guard, cleaves netizens

A video of superstar Salman Khan slapping a security guard has gone viral on social media, leaving netizens split over whether actor’s behaviour was right or not.

In the video, Salman is seen exiting a cinema hall amidst a lot of people and then suddenly turning and slapping one of his security guards, who was making way for the actor.

Though it’s not clearly visible what irked Bhurut actor and made him slap the guard, it’s reported that Salman got angry because guard had pushed a young fan.

Social media users have a mixed reaction on this.

Supporting Salman’s behaviour, one user wrote, “True human can never see torture on children. Salman is a true human being.”

Another gushed, “One of the million reason why we love this man.”

But there is a section of social media users who slammed Salman for slapping the security man.

One Instagram user wrote, “This is not the way to deal. He (security guard) was doing his job. It’s very difficult to handle fans.”

“This man needs to be in jail for all the crimes committed, including hitting the security”, a netizen wrote. – IANS

Mixed reaction: Social media users share split opinions about Salman Khan slapping a security guard.

Controversy: A poster of Article 15. The film that is reportedly inspired from the Badaun murder case, seems to be heading for trouble.

NEW PROJECT: Woody Allen’s next film will be a comedy-romance.

Controversy: A poster of Article 15. The film that is reportedly inspired from the Badaun murder case, seems to be heading for trouble.
Summer Entertainment City’s 3rd edition kicks off at DECC

By Mudassir Raja

People across Qatar usually prefer to stay indoors during summers. However, during Eid holidays residents look forward to opportunities to go out and enjoy with their families.

One such place for families and children can be the Summer Entertainment City (SEC) that kick started activities yesterday at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC). The city offers a variety of activities for the family starting from shopping area, food market, kids playing areas and cultural shows. It will continue till July 13.

QSports is organising the SEC 2019 in collaboration with the National Tourism Council. Dubbed as Qatar’s biggest summer family entertainment event, this will be the third edition of the SEC.

Sharing the details of the entertainment city with Community, Aya Kasab, Head of Business Development Unit at QSports, said: “The main areas of the SEC 2019 include amusement rides, skills games with prizes, bespoke trampoline park, a kids driving school setup, giant blocks park for kids to play and build with large lego-type blocks, a 1000sqm ocean ball soft play area, Qatar’s first InflataPark spread over 1,200sqm, world’s largest bounce castle, a 1,200sqm skate park, synthetic ice skating, Spider Climbing tower and over 45 food options and 100 retail outlets.”

She added: “This year’s highlight also includes a 6,000sqm area dedicated for gaming and virtual reality featuring some of the world’s most advanced VR simulators, gaming stations and themed gaming areas.”

QSports has also collaborated with other companies this year to make the entertainment city more attractive. Aya said: “We have also engaged other entertainment entities in Qatar such as Megapolis, Kids Mondo, E-blue Gaming, MiniPolis, Virtuosity, Angry Birds Park and Bounce to offer a diverse range of entertainment and kids’ activities at the SEC 2019.”

The organisers also plan to engage mainstream TV media to arrange different live shows for kids full of entertainment. Aya added: “While not yet confirmed, Qatar TV may host a live kid’s show from the venue for the duration of the event. We are in negotiation with them and hopefully, they will soon visit the DECC.

“We are also in talks with Qatar Rail to collaborate on joint activations for Summer Entertainment city.”

The SEC organisers have also brought new attraction to the city in the form of different prizes. “This year, for the first time, the visitors to SEC 2019 will get a chance to win a brand new KIA Telluride car as part of a raffle draw. The visitors purchasing the daily gold pass, gaming pass or the season pass will get a chance to enter into a raffle draw. The raffle draw will be held on the last day of SEC that is July 13, 2019”, Aya said.

Yet another attraction at the SEC is going to be cultural performances organised by different embassies. She added: “Live performances and roaming shows will also be featured daily at the venue including performances from participating embassies namely, Georgia, Bangladesh, Indonesia and South Africa having confirmed their participation. More embassies are likely to offer and confirm cultural performances at the venue in the next few days.”

Ticket prices range varies. QR15 is entry fee to the SEC 2019, or visitors can purchase Gold Pass for the entry for QR165, Gaming Pass is for QR165, Season Pass for QR999 and Season Gaming Pass for QR1,250. The other passes include Gold Pass for 40 Ride tickets plus 5 VR/Gaming tickets, Gaming Pass for 40 VR and Gaming tickets (used in gaming section only), Season Pass for unlimited entries to the venue for the duration of the event – each visit entitles visitor to a Gold Pass – Gaming Season Pass for unlimited entries to the venue for the duration of the event – each visit entitles visitor to a Gaming Pass.

“The success of the event is also made possible by our strategic event partners such as Hamad Medical Corporation, KIA Motors, Al Rayyan Water, National Tourism Council, Q-Tickets, B2C (Technology Partner) Ministry of Interior, Radio Olive, Radio Suno, Kabayan Radio, and other media partners to include IloveQatar.net, What’s Up Doha, Qatar News and Qatarday.com”, Aya said.