

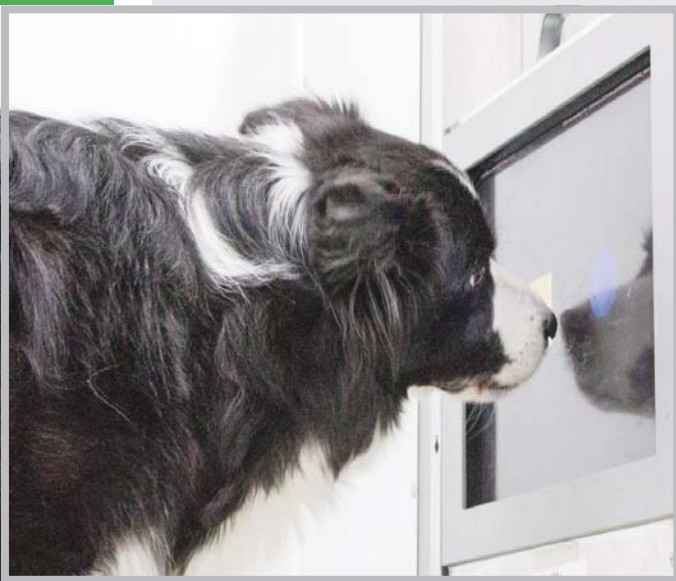
## PET PALACE

### people & their pets

Look out for the Arab Times series, the Pet Palace, and read about how people and their animals enrich each other's lives.

The Palace welcomes submissions by our readers. If you'd like to tell the world about your pet, send us a photograph and accompanying article for publication.

— Editor



A Border Collie takes part in a touchscreen experiment at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna on Feb 26. (AFP)

VIENNA, April 2, (Agencies): At first sight, enthusiastic Border Collies Miley and Tiara may not appear to be providing insights into the deeper workings of the canine mind.

Even while demonstrating an experiment used in a recent study at Vienna's University of Veterinary Medicine, they're having too much fun.

It involves them running to a touchscreen with one round and one square shape. Every time they hit the round shape with their noses, they're rewarded with a treat.

The results gathered after hundreds of dogs took part in the study suggest that older dogs benefit from similar games, just as Sudoku and other brain exercises can help their owners stay mentally agile.

"Sometimes with older dogs we might feel that we can just let them retire to the couch and let them sleep all day and that's fine," Lisa Wallis, one of the authors of the report, told AFP.

"But you're not really doing them a kindness," she said.

Even if owners keep giving their dogs physical exercise, this won't improve their mental agility, says Professor Ludwig Huber, one of the lead authors.

"The brain needs more stimulation and also problems to solve," he says.

In contrast to most toys which can soon become repetitive, Huber says a touchscreen can be used to present an "unlimited number of stimuli" and the games could get gradually more complex.

Other games used in the study involved having to touch a moving shape or being trained to distinguish between "good" and "bad" images and then choose them accordingly.

The younger dogs and dogs who were already used to playing similar games fared best but even with the older dogs, performance improved with practice.

The results follow a study conducted among humans last year in the United States that suggested older participants who regularly played computer brain games may have cut their chances of dementia, although experts cautioned further research was necessary in that case.

The authors of the Vienna study admit that although the dogs and their owners appeared to have enjoyed taking part in the study, it would be difficult to replicate at home.

Wallis says that short of installing a similar screen at home — as she has done

for her own dogs — or at vet's surgeries and dog daycare centres, the need of the hour is for new technologies.

The team at the university is working on software that could be used more commonly, ideally paired with tablets or other devices adapted for dogs.

"Wet noses will always be a problem," Wallis admits.

But even if touchscreens for dogs are a little way off, Huber says using touchscreens with different species could open up a whole new vista for scientists and researchers.

"It can also be used with wolves, which is a very important one in scientific terms."

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Americans still love Labrador retrievers, but the nation's flirtation with French bulldogs has reached new heights.

Labs remain the country's most popular purebred dog for a 27th year, while German shepherds and golden retrievers have hung onto the second and third spots in new American Kennel Club rankings released Wednesday.

But Frenchies hit a highest-ever No. 4, and German shorthaired pointers cracked the top 10 for the first time.

### Kuwait



Sun's rays sparkling in gold behind Kuwait Towers, (Musa'ed Al-Ghariba — KUNA)

### New Look

#### 'Strong-minded, independent spirit'

# Sheikha Intisar a dynamic young lady of royal family

This is the first in a series of articles on HH Sheikha Intisar Salem Al Ali Al Sabah, a dynamic young lady of the royal family.

— Editor

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By Lidia Qattan

Special to the Arab Times

HH Sheikha Intisar Salem Al Ali Al Sabah is a cultured, highly sociable lady, strong-minded and an independent spirit, born at the zenith of Kuwait's golden era of high culture, she grew up absorbing the dynamic spirit of that period in the history of her country.

Born in a large family surrounding, the seventh of 12 children, she was bright and inquisitive, because she was asking many questions and was rather talkative she was nicknamed "Royter".

Sheikha Intisar spent the first part of her childhood with her grandmother from her father's side, a lady of high spirit living in a large household overlooking the sea, near the Amiri Hospital.

When her schooling began Sheikha Intisar moved back with her family in Surra, a new district in the skirt of Kuwait City, but she still loved to spend her summer vacation and holidays with her grandmother.

to her it was a boring practice that dampens her imagination, for this reason she was not too interested in poetry, biology and anything that relies on memorizing formulas and names.

Indeed, education to be effective should be a pleasant learning experience that spurs the mental development of the youngsters; most importantly its objective is to enhance the individual's self-esteem and confidence, which in turn spurs the development of latent potentials for creativity and leadership.

At sixteen, Sheikha Intisar graduated from high school; on entering the Kuwait University she was assigned to physics, a very interesting field that deals with all natural phenomena; the process of careful observations leading to laws and theories give birth to many applied sciences that spur human development.



Lidia Qattan

Though the subject was interesting, the atmosphere in which she was studying made her to leave it and take political science instead, which is another field of great interest to her.

Politics is the art of living together in organized communities, it is the method of regulating relations between the individual and the group of which he or she is part, hence every community even the most primitive most have some forms of laws and regulation to

abide to, especially when property enters the equation; indeed economics is strongly affected by politics and vice-versa.

Sheikh Intisar's fondness of history made political science a particularly interesting subject of study to which she took with enthusiasm; this spurred her to improve her knowledge of Arabic, because during her schooling in all the subjects, exempt Arabic and Religion were in English, hence at graduation from high school her knowledge of Arabic was scant. During lectures at first she was writing her notes mostly in English, but from the fourth term she could write them in Arabic.

Incidentally Sheikha Intisar was in her third year of University, already married and the mother of two little girls: Nor and Fatma, when her husband fell very ill. Her priority being her family she left the University to accompany him abroad, unaware that she had to notify the University's authorities before leaving. At her return she was surprised to have been dismissed from the University; but instead of pursuing the matter and get herself reaccepted, she dismissed the whole incident to give her undivided attention to her children. Incidentally at about that time the sudden Iraqi invasion of 1990-1991, shattered all her plans including her intention of continuing her university education.

Iraqi hostilities were not new to her, from 1934 Kuwait had to be constantly on the alert to avoid Iraqi intrigues; though for some time the last Kuwaiti-Iraqi crisis got her wor-

ried, she never thought there would be a total invasion, even after the last meeting of the Prime Minister, Crown Prince, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah with his Iraqi counterpart at Jeddah to solve the crisis, and the Iraqi delegation aborted every attempt at a solution of the problem.

The amassing of the Iraqi army on the frontier spell trouble, so at his return to Kuwait on Wednesday afternoon Sheikh Saad met with the top members of the royal family, Sheikh Salem Al Ali, her father was among them.

#### Attempt

That night he was at the "GONE", the supreme headquarters of the Kuwaiti armed force, with Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah and other top members of the royal family, besides generals and other high ranking military were monitoring the situation on the frontier. When at 2 am the Iraqi army began crossing over swiftly moving south towards the capital, any attempt by the Prime Minister and his colleagues in contacting the Iraqi authorities on the hot line failed; within hours the Iraqis were already on the outskirts of Kuwait City itself!

While this was happening Sheikha Intisar was blissfully asleep in the house of her father. The plans of a beautiful weekend at the chalet enjoying swimming and the usual gathering were still in her mind, when her sister-in-law came to her room with the distressing news of a total Iraqi invasion. Still in the haze



Sheikha Intisar Salem Al Ali Al Sabah

of her dreams she didn't believe, indeed when she opened the window and saw army trucks and tanks on the highway close to the house, she waved at them thinking they were Kuwaiti soldiers. Only when she realized what was happening she was assailed by a mixture of bewilderment and worries.

For the next two days she remained in the house of her father, with armed men guarding the premises. On the third day she and her sister and kids moved into the house of her brother in Bayan, deeming it was safer, but when the Bayan Palace complex came under firing, the shaking of the house with every rocket-blast terrorized the children. To sooth their fear Sheikha Intisar and her sister were playing games with them;

this was helping them to hold back their own emotions in front of the children.

With the Iraqis at close quarter, the house in Beyan was not as safe as it was presumed to be, so, five days later Sheikha Intisar decided to move to Jabriya into another house less conspicuous than the previous one, but with barely enough room to accommodate forty people, actually the overcrowding was helping everyone in keeping a cheerful front.

Needing some clothing Sheikh Intisar went to her father's house to fetch them, but when she entered, the void in the house assailed her with such a distressing feeling of sadness and anguish that she cried. Like in a trance she opened the wardrobe to take some clothing for herself and her girls pervaded by a lingering feeling of bewilderment in her heart, as the whole sequence of events coming to her mind made her more acutely aware of the situation she was in.

The unknown is always scary but when faced with courage and determination it triggers latent potentials that enhance the chances of success. On the way back to her family the thought of her ancestors leaving their homeland Al Hear in Nejd came to her mind. Thinking what made them leave and of their courage in facing the unknown inspired her with the determination to be worthy of their memory, with such a feeling she went back to her people.

To be continued