



NEIGHBORS

UAE

UAE Space Agency launches satellite challenge at Hackathon 2020

ABU DHABI: The UAE Space Agency is launching the "Satellite Challenge" in line with the UAE Innovation Month, as part of its participation in the "UAE Hackathon 2020 - Data for Happiness and Wellbeing". The UAE Hackathon is organized by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), in collaboration with the National Program for Happiness and Wellbeing.

The Satellite Challenge aims to introduce society to the stages for manufacturing and launching satellites, by encouraging them to participate in the introduction and development of innovative solutions, from the initial design of the satellite to launching the satellite. The challenge seeks to motivate participants to devise distinct methods and ideas to provide data about satellites, whether through applications, games or innovative technical solutions provided by the participants during the challenge.

His Excellency Dr Engr Mohammed Nasser Al Ahabbi, Director General of the UAE Space Agency, said: "Our participation in the UAE Hackathon confirms the Agency's keenness to participate in events and initiatives that promote a culture of innovation among members of society, encouraging them to adopt its innovative practices across various sectors, including the space sector. The challenge comes in line with our strategic goals aimed at raising the community's awareness about the space sector and space sciences,

and working to organize and develop the national space sector to contribute to supporting a sustainable national economy."

"Previous editions of the UAE Hackathon witnessed a remarkable interaction from participants. This year we aim to provide contestants with the opportunity to take up the challenge and take part in enhancing competencies, disseminating knowledge and innovation, and shaping the future of data, particularly space data," added His Excellency Dr Engr Al Ahabbi.

Engr Nasser bin Hammad, Chief Innovation Officer of the UAE Space Agency, said: "We will turn the challenge into a platform that encourages participants in the UAE Hackathon 2020 to leverage their innovative ideas and come up with outreaching solutions that contribute to raising awareness and knowledge about the space sector and satellites."

Additionally, Bin Hammad highlighted the agency's efforts in supporting innovation, through the launch and implementation of many programs and initiatives that promote and consolidate innovation in the corporate work scene, in line with government efforts to create a favorable creative thinking environment.

Taking place over four weeks, the 3rd edition of the UAE Hackathon will be held at Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi between Feb 3-5; American University

of Sharjah between Feb 9-11; Ajman University between Feb 10-12; Umm Al Quwain Cultural Center between Feb 11-13; American University of Ras Al Khaimah, between Feb 16-18; University of Science & Technology of Fujairah between Feb 18-20; and at Zayed University between Feb 24-26, 2020.

Since its inception, the UAE Space Agency — in cooperation with the relevant innovation-centered entities across the UAE and in line with the Government Accelerators Program "Ghadan 21", aimed at transforming Abu Dhabi into a global innovation hub — has been keen to adopt and launch various scientific initiatives and programs that contribute to spreading the culture of innovation and inspiring all society members. Through its initiatives, the agency aims to target young people and encourage them to share their creative ideas, and turn them into a reality serving the national space sector.

The agency recently cooperated with Krypto Labs to launch the UAE NewSpace Innovation Program, aimed at boosting the growth of companies in the private spaceflight sector. Selected applicants will be mentored by global space experts and other professionals who will help them cultivate their business creation, marketing, and sales skills. Moreover, students, entrepreneurs and startups will have the opportunity to secure the necessary funding to transform their emerging investments into viable market products.

Saudi

New, dynamic market for golf

KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC CITY, Saudi Arabia: Majed Al Sorour, Chief Executive Officer of the Saudi Golf Federation and Golf Saudi today gave the opening keynote speech of the inaugural Golf Saudi Summit to outline Saudi Arabia's ambition to become recognised as the most innovative market in the sport within the next 10 years.

Delivering his address to the first ever assembly of national and international stakeholders in the Kingdom following the conclusion of the Saudi International powered by SoftBank Investment Advisers, Al Sorour said: "It gives me great pleasure to be able to welcome you all to Saudi Arabia and to discuss something that is very close to my heart, the great game of golf. Golf requires commitment. Dedication to mastering the basics. The sport demands self-governance, etiquette, discipline and self-governance. As a result of these values, I want golf to become part of the fabric of modern-day Saudi Arabia."

The inaugural Golf Saudi Summit will allow delegates the chance to learn more about golf's rapid growth within the Kingdom while evolving key business relations. In the coming days, attendees will see first-hand how the nation has taken major strides in golf development through Golf Saudi's commitment to creating a new ecosystem, which has focussed on Golf Saudi's five key development pillars: Access and Infrastructure, Events, National Team and Academies, Mass Participation and Tourism.

Showcasing Saudi Arabia's ambition and its connectivity to the national Vision 2030 social-economic development programme, the Summit is the brainchild of His Excellency Yasir Al-Rumayyan, the Chairman of the Saudi Golf Federation and Golf Saudi and has been established to bring the leading business figures in global golf together to debate how Saudi can pioneer new benchmarks in mass participation, design and management. Key metrics Golf Saudi wish to achieve in the next decade include having 13-27 thousand registered golfers in the Kingdom, to ensure over one million Saudi nationals have actively tried golf, as well as establishing golfing camps for children with a minimum of one camp per week at each golf course, with each camp consisting of roughly 30 children.

"Under the vision of His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince, Mohammed Bin Salman, the nation has taken the boldest steps in its history," Al Sorour continued. "We have laid out major plans for the socio-economic growth and development of the Kingdom; in tourism, commerce, investment and the entertainment sectors. The nation has taken its boldest step and is very much open for business. These are hugely exciting times. I have a number of overarching aspirations for golf in the Kingdom, but fundamentally I want golf to help develop the leaders of tomorrow, in government, in business and in all walks of life."

"During this week's inaugural Golf Saudi Summit, we are hoping we that our conversations can play a significant role in shaping our collective vision for golf in Saudi Arabia. We want to debate how we drive true golfing success in Saudi Arabia. How we introduce the game at every level. To children and to adults. To men and to women. Right across the Kingdom."

During the Golf Saudi Summit, businesses will be given a unique opportunity to tap into this progress, as the Kingdom showcases numerous lucrative opportunities and its ability to drive real estate, corporate, tourism and business-to-business benefits.



MEFCC to hold skilled artists who have worked on well-known projects ranging from DC Marvel, Disney and many more.

Dubai

MEFCC back with bigger workshops, awesome comic artists

DUBAI, Feb 4: Middle East Film and Comic Con (MEFCC) has a treat in store for creators, comic lovers and art enthusiasts attending the region's biggest pop culture festival. With an agenda packed with entertaining workshops and a chance to meet some of the biggest artists in the industry, fans can dive into a world of innovation, imagination, and colors, and create their own masterpieces at this year's event.

Now in its ninth edition MEFCC runs from 5-7 March 2020 at DWTC and plays host to world-renowned artists who have worked on some of the biggest projects for DC, Marvel, Disney and much more. Fans will have a chance to attend super interactive workshops where they can explore original artworks, prints and sculptures and meet some of their favorite artists, some of whom have flown in from all corners of the globe to make the event.

This year, pop culture fans and art lovers will get to meet a host of renowned artists at dedicated workshops including:

■ **Sam De La Rosa:** A powerhouse in the industry, De La Rosa has worked with Marvel, DC, Image, Disney, and Dark Horse. Credits include Spider-Man, Venom, Carnage, Black Panther, The Avengers, Star Wars, X-Men and more. His contribution to Venom's Lethal Protector storyline helped inspire the production of the Venom movie that was released in 2018 starring Tom Hardy.

■ **Jeremy Clark:** He has been able to work on various comic projects for multiple publishers. Iconically, his work on the comics of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is worth noting, and his work on Franklin & Ghost has contributed to an animated adaptation of the comic book, with prolific voice actors Billy Bob Thornton and Sean Schemmel being a part of the project.

■ **D. Michael Watkins:** The founder and owner of Highburn Studios, he has worked with Marvel, DC, Image, Dynamite, Dark Horse and many more publishers, including titles such as Sonic The Hedgehog, Transformers, Iron Man and

Avengers. As a practitioner of 30 different Martial Arts, he includes his skills into his artwork.

■ **Rodney Ramos:** He has worked on just about every major character for Marvel Comics and DC Comics with a flourish that makes him a master at his craft. His works include masterful craftsmanship for clients ranging from Valiant, Malibu, Acclaim, Marvel UK, and Neal Adams Continuity Studios, in addition to Marvel and DC. He reached cult status with his work on DC's "Transmetropolitan," a huge fan favorite!

■ **Mostafa Moussa:** A veteran of the comic book industry. Mostafa is originally from the region but managed to speed his way through many publishers following his graduation from college. He has worked on titular comics including Batman, X-men, Godzilla and many more.

"MEFCC is back this year with a lot of energy bringing fans some incredible workshop experiences," said MEFCC Event Manager, Michael Lamprecht. "With some of the biggest artists in the industry we have ensured that our workshops are bigger, better and more exciting than ever before! Fans will get a chance to meet the artists, learn from them and even create their own personalized pieces. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy a fun and action-packed weekend learning from some of the best names in the business."

This year workshops will be much bigger for pop culture lovers who want to jump between consuming and creating. There will be a huge range of topics discussed at workshop including:

■ A session by Bob Hoffman titled, How to Bring Comics into Your School the Right Way

■ Hoffman, a professor of Mass-Communication, Art & Design, and Language for almost 16 years, will walk students, teachers, and curious convention-goers through the initial steps and pitfalls of introducing comic books, comic strips, and graphic novels into a K-12 or university curriculum. He will

be providing handouts and links and giving out prizes as he opens up the floor to those who have questions or are keen to share their own experiences.

■ A session by Mariana Oliveira Van Den Bos (Rei Suzuki) and Fang Fang Lie (Kaoru Lily)

■ Rei Suzuki and Kaoru Lily are two renowned cosplayers from The Netherlands who participated in last year's 2019 World Cosplay Summit. At this year's Comic Con, they will be speaking about cosplay, sharing their experience of last year's world Cosplay Summit and will also be judging the Cosplay Competition at MEFCC, including The World Cosplay Summit competition.

Also hosting a workshop will be Speedy Comics, who last year ran one of the most popular stands and will bring back International artists, Bob Layton — Iron Man, Ant Man, Valiant Comics, David Angelo Roman — Rick and Morty cover artist and Warren Louw — Comic and Graphic Artist, to run a workshop at this year's event.

More details about the full workshop sessions schedule will be announced in the coming weeks.

This year's MEFCC is shaping to be one of the biggest events with fans urged to buy their tickets soon. The exclusive Gold VIP tickets sold out in the first week, but fans can still purchase other tickets including Silver VIP, day tickets, and family tickets for a group of four for the price of three, with children under five granted free entry.

Fans can purchase tickets online to get up to 30% off versus at the door during the event. There are several categories to choose from, for more information on MEFCC and tickets please visit www.mefcc.com. To purchase your tickets online, please visit <https://dubai.platinumlist.net/> or <https://tickets.virginmegastore.me/>, or visit any Virgin Megastore branch located in the UAE.

King Abdul Aziz University launches fifth Gulf Theater Festival

JEDDAH, Feb 4: The fifth Gulf Theater Festival for universities and higher education institutions in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states was launched at King Abdul Aziz University (KAU) on Sunday, in collaboration with the GCC General Secretariat.

The festival takes place at the King Faisal Conference Center, with the participation of 12 GCC universities and more than 100 students.

The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Jeddah Gov. Prince Mishal bin Majed and Education Minister Dr Hamad bin Mohammed Al-Asheikh, in the presence of Jeddah Deputy Gov. Prince Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Jalawi and KAU Rector Prof Abdulrahman bin Obaid Al-Youbi.

Guests of honor and the audience watched a theater show and a documentary highlighting various plays by the participating universities.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Al-

Youbi said it is an honor for KAU to host the festival.

"We're pleased to welcome all guests from GCC counties, and it's an opportunity for students to practice their theatrical skills and creativity," he added. "This festival is considered a cultural interaction."

He said the festival aims to instil confidence in students, showcase their abilities and talents, and contribute to social integration through the arts, especially theatrical art.

KAU has allocated five theaters to host the festival's activities. The theaters' total capacity exceeds 4,000 seats. The closing and awards ceremony will be on Feb 7.

The participating universities are KAU, the University of Bahrain, Kuwait University, Sultan Qaboos University, Taif University, Umm Al-Qura University, King Saud University, Jazan University, Northern Borders University, Jouf University, Taibah University and King Khalid University.

editor's choice

