

Start up Bahrain Week kicks off

Participants during the GCCGC and Game Jam yesterday

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Start up Bahrain Week got underway yesterday with GCC Game Conference (GCCGC), the first gaming conference to be held in Bahrain.

Gamers and game developers from around the region attended the conference held at Bahrain Polytechnic premises yesterday.

Organised by Infiteware in collaboration with Bahrain Polytechnic, the conference features talks by industry experts on topics such as programming, design, ethics and the business of game development.

Yesterday was also the conclusion of GCC game jam, a 48-hour game development hackathon, which launched on March 1.

"We have never had a conference like this before, so this is a brand new endeavour for us. People from all over GCC are here. The conference has two tracks, one is for business/community which is for people who are interested in creating a studio or in forming groups for game development. The other track is the technical one, it covers the nitty-gritty of game development," Ameen Altajer, Managing Director of Infiteware told *DT News*.

"We are also showcasing the best

games in the GCC today. The games were handpicked by me and they are of very high quality," he said.

Regarding the game jam, Altajer said, "This is the third jam we have organized but this is the biggest by far."

Startup Bahrain week is being organized by Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) and Tamkeen (Labour Fund) and held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and Chairman of the Bahrain Economic Development Board. The event which ends on Thursday features four more events.

Today, Rowad will host their 'Majlis' at Alto, Downtown Rotana. Another event held today will be CH9 and YoStartups's event "My Startup Bootcamp". In the heritage houses of Muharraq on Tuesday, THINKERS & DOERS will bring "Follow The Leaders" a full day of business meetings, panel discussions. On Wednesday and Thursday, Unbound, in partnership with the Bahrain EDB and supported by StartUp Bahrain, will bring its globally established, award-winning, innovation festival to Bahrain.

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Bahrain is a gaming hub for GCC: experts



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Manama

Bahrain is in an ideal position to become a gaming hub for the GCC, according to industry experts.

Bahrain is the most attractive country in the GCC to Gaming companies, Tariq Mukhtar, a successful game developer and a well-known activist for the gaming community in the GCC told *DT News*.

According to him, gaming companies prefer Bahrain over Dubai, Abu Dhabi and

Saudi Arabia for "factors such as government support and regulations, which contribute to Bahrain's allure".

He told *DT News* that Bahrain is sitting in an attractive position with "International companies looking forward to setting up in Bahrain".

"Setting up in Bahrain is a lot more lucrative," he said adding: "it is cheaper and the government is very helpful and the telecommunication infrastructure is also very strong here."

"The environment is also better here, it is a lot more

friendly etc," Mukhtar said.

"The Bahrain government should take advantage of even more," he stressed.

Ameen Altajer, Managing Director of Infiteware, told *DT News* that Bahrain's gaming industry is going forward.

"The government is giving us a lot of support, which is in stark contrast to some years ago. We are getting financial support as well as marketing support. We did not get this back in 2012 when I first started the Bahrain Game Developers community," Altajer said.