

Plethora of cultural expressions

Bahrain's state-of-the-art pavilion at Dubai Expo 2020 shows new symbiotic physical space and innovation relationship



The magnificent and splendid appearance of the Bahrain pavilion



● **Once inside, visitors are marveled by how columns are spread out in all directions**

● **After the event, the pavilion will be fully dismantled and rebuilt permanently in Bahrain**

Dubai

In the midst of the sprawling huge Dubai Expo 2020, the pavilion of Bahrain is mirroring the plethora of cultural expressions in the Kingdom and reflecting the symbiotic relationship between physical space and innovation stands out.

Located on Sunset Avenue in the Opportunity District and

with a large serrated white and red flag firmly planted in front of it, the pavilion awes with its splendour, appeals with its aluminum-made exterior facade representing one of Bahrain's main exports, and charms with its unique 24m-high rectangular shape.

It explores the theme of density as an enabler of opportunities through an immersive visitor experience.

Visitors enter it through a ramp that "is meant to be a point of transition between the outside world of the Expo and the inside world."

The pavilion with its open exhibition space of 900m² is conceived as a physical and spatial experience of density and the future possibilities of building in an increasingly dense world, the introduction to the pavilion says.

"Designed by Christian Kerez Zurich AG, it is imagined as an open plan space, submerged in the site and accessed through a ramp that creates a transition between the outer and inner worlds of the pavilion."

Once inside, visitors used to columns and beams articulating architectural space horizontally and vertically closely following the boundaries, are marveled by how the columns here are spread out in all directions.

"The structure of this central space is made of 126 columns of 11cm in diameter and 24m in height that join one another at several points throughout the height of the space.

"The columns support one another and support the roof, providing a poetic structure that demonstrates principles of connection and density in an exploration of the three-dimensional possibilities inspired by geometric gypsum ornaments of traditional Bahraini architecture.

"The visitor experiences the space as one would be walking through a dense forest where the exhibition and programme of the pavilion cohabit openly with the architecture of the

900m²

The size of the Bahrain pavilion's open exhibition space

space. The columns are made of steel, whereas the outer facade is composed of aluminum, showcasing one of Bahrain's largest exports. At the end of the six months, the pavilion will be fully dismantled and rebuilt permanently in Bahrain."

"This central space houses the main exhibition space, the gift shop and the cafe that are loosely nestled between the columns of the building, shaping the physical experience of density in the pavilion.

The pavilion, one of the 192 countries participating in the Dubai Expo 2020, regularly welcomes visitors from around the world who are driven by a strong sense of excitement and enthusiasm as they live a unique experience of "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future."

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Cold weather is here, expatriates can heave 'sigh of relief' again



The arrival of winter reduces the financial pressure on expats

TDT | Manama

Cool temperature is now on our doorstep as a relatively mild winter is finally coming in Bahrain.

Weathermen have forecast unsettled weather this week with scattered rains in some parts of the Kingdom.

In fact, mornings are getting chillier by the day, and people are struggling to fight off the cold weather.

What does that mean for expatriates?

Expatriates, who make up 52.6% of the population and play a key role in the development of the national economy, can now heave a collective sigh of relief – although only temporarily!

Power bills have already gone down last month and will continue until March or April next year.

Every hot summer months – from May to October – expatriates all have the same issue and concern: extremely high electricity and water bills!

This year is no exception. The issue has caused an uproar among the expat population as it comes at a time when many have lost their jobs due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).

Utility bills are a significant part of every household's monthly budget. And as always, utility bills are the highest during the summer months due to the increased use of air conditioners and water, making it a struggle for many expatriates.

Since 2016, expats are charged 29 fils per unit for electricity and 750 fils per unit for water.

Bahrainis pay 3 fils per unit for electricity under 3,000 units, increasing to 9 fils for

anything above this. This means expats pay a massive 866 per cent more than Bahrainis.

The abnormally high utility bills are causing sizeable burden to low-income expats.

Absurdly high utility bills are weighing down on them as many are unable to cope with the rising costs. Many of them struggle to pay bills and they leave Bahrain for good as their entire salary is just going towards expenses.

For other expatriates, especially those with families, it is unreasonable to pay utility costs that almost amount to the rent, so they are forced to send their families home.

Expenses are soaring but salaries remain the same – there is no increase, in fact – and in some sectors salaries are not paid on time by many employers.

This is making the situation worse for expatriates who send money to their families back home.

Many are forced to move into shared accommodation because they are struggling to meet rising expenses, foremost of which is the soaring electricity and water bill.

Tenants, bachelors, couples and large families, who live in apartment buildings that share electricity and water bills also complain about what they describe as an unfair system.

In some cases, expats are paying utility bills that are even higher than their monthly rent.

Indeed, the pleasant cold weather is here again so expatriates can make the most of the coming months until April when utility bills are still "affordable".

Gulf forum highlights volunteers' efforts

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The second Gulf Forum of Red Crescent Bodies and Societies has recommended shedding more light on the qualitative efforts of volunteers in the Arab Gulf countries in the field of relief and humanitarian work, particularly during this time of pandemic.

The recommendation was aimed at showing the distinctive experience in this field of the Bahrain Red Crescent Soci-

ety, which hosted the two-day forum recently.

It also recommended unifying plans and strategies to attract young people as volunteers in the Gulf Red Crescent bodies and societies.

Likewise, it recommended strengthening the role of volunteer work in the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf as one of the tributaries of community development by communicating with groups of society

and identifying their needs and helping governments to meet these needs.

At the conclusion of their work, the participants stressed the importance of strengthening ties between workers in this field at the Gulf level, in a way that contributes to directing the energies of the Gulf youth to serve their societies, in addition to instilling a love of volunteer work by deepening the bonds of communication between the owners of voluntary finger-

prints of various generations.

They stressed the importance of holding more forums, courses, and workshops aimed at providing volunteers with field and administrative experiences in charitable and organizational work and directing human energies for the benefit of society through team building and self-development in multiple aspects that are beneficial to him and his community.

The forum was held under the title "Human Giving".

iGA recipients of Prince Salman bin Hamad Medal for Medical Merit hailed



Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA) Chief Executive Mohammed Ali Al Qaed met with a number of iGA team members who received the Prince Salman bin Hamad Medal for Medical Merit. Al Qaed expressed his gratitude to His Majesty the King, highlighting the important role that the iGA has played throughout the pandemic, with its team members working tirelessly towards supporting Bahrain's recovery. He said that HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister is committed to the deployment of advanced technologies in enhancing the government's work and introducing further online services. iGA has consistently contributed to efforts to combat the pandemic since its onset, thanks to its team members' patriotism and sense of responsibility towards their community.

Four arsonists to stand trial

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The High Criminal Court will be hearing tomorrow the case of four men accused of setting an ATM on fire in Al Dair area.

The defendants are said to have torched the device by using tyres and petrol.

They ran away from the scene, but after police investigations, the culprits were identified.

They were arrested, and it was discovered that they were in connection with the fugitive terrorists who funded their operations.

One of the suspects is said to have suffered after his body caught fire.

The defendants have been charged of setting a private property on fire and putting lives at risk.