

100 shops to open at new mall in Muharraq



■ The new Seef Mall Muharraq

By LAALA KASHEF ALGHATA

NEARLY 100 stores will be up and running in a new BD20 million waterfront shopping mall in Muharraq on Saturday.

Seef Mall Muharraq, a joint venture from Seef Properties, The Malls Company and Hayakala, covers 72,000 square metres and is anchored by a Geant Hypermarket alongside 132 stores, a 14-theatre cineplex, a food court, restaurants, children's entertainment centre Magic Island and parking for up to 450 cars.

However, Seef Properties general manager Robert Addison refused to comment on complaints raised by the Muharraq Municipal Council on traffic congestion near the mall, but added that the company was working with Works, Municipalities and Urban Planning Ministry to find a solution.

"We plan to find a solution and work with everyone," he said.

"The original road plan provided a solution, so we want to see that happen."

Mr Addison said the mall will be fully operational by early next month with the cineplex, which includes IMAX and VIP theatres run by a Dubai-based company, opening in May.

"The mall, considering the size, is not made to compete with Seef Mall in Seef, City Centre Bahrain or The Avenues when it opens," he said.

"I don't expect Saudis to



■ Mr Addison ... fourth mall planned

drive past those three malls and come here. Seef Mall Muharraq is mostly for residents in the Muharraq - from Arad, Muharraq and Amwaj Islands.

"We have 30 new shops and outlets that are open here that we don't have at the Seef Mall in Seef area.

"Seventy-five per cent of the shops will be open by Saturday, with the rest open by March.

"Some have spent BD100,000 to BD200,000 fitting up their shops.

"That's a lot of money being invested, which is a real expression of confidence in business in Bahrain.

"We could've let another 30 to 40pc more shops - we had the demand.

"Some shops here have higher rent rates than in Seef.

"We're surfacing 6,000sqm of land, currently for parking but could be for a future expansion."

He revealed that Seef Properties planned to build a fourth

mall in the country.

"Now that we have Seef Mall in Seef, Isa Town, and Muharraq, we're looking for a new location, ideally in the south," he added.

"The location depends on land, we have three years left in our plan.

"We want to grow the business, and in the medium-run also plan to build malls in the region."

The GDN earlier reported that the Muharraq Municipal Council was inundated with complaints about bottlenecks caused by the new mall in Arad.

Councillors warned that the mall's outlets will not be allowed to open if investors do not agree to construct new access roads within the next two years.

They also threatened legal action against the landowner, Muharraq Club, and the investors.

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Bahrain Polytechnic signs training deal

BAHRAIN Polytechnic yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding with Ebtikar Association to develop student projects and hold training programmes.

The agreement was signed by Polytechnic acting chief executive Dr Mohamed Al Aseeri and the association founder and president Osama Al Khaja.

Under the agreement, students will have access to external mentors who will support and assist them in their projects.



■ Mr Al Khaja, left, and Dr Al Aseeri at the signing ceremony

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