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-- AAA Veterans, Led by Former
Microsoft (DirectX) Lead and an EA
Director, Start a New Game Studio

A new gaming studio, ILHAM, has opened its doors in Richmond, Virginia, with a bold mission to create AA games that combine deep themes—such as mysticism and human nature—with immersive, engaging gameplay

About ILHAM

ILHAM is dedicated to exploring untapped themes and aesthetics, drawing inspiration from Middle Eastern and Indian Subcontinental cultures. By highlighting philosophies and perspectives rarely represented in Western or Far Eastern games, the studio aims to offer players something truly fresh and distinctive.

Founder Sajid Farooq, former lead of DirectX at Microsoft, brings seasoned leadership and a bold vision, believing gamers are ready for worlds and stories that break the mold. "Gamers are aching for something fresh. People love rich narratives, especially those that pair with culturally diverse worlds



This is the logo of ILHAM



The photo of Sajid Farooq, the founder of ILHAM

rarely explored in gaming," Farooq explains.

In addition to its creative vision, ILHAM is committed to fostering both professional and personal growth. The studio is assembling a diverse team that blends seasoned industry veterans with up-and-coming talent. Establishing its HQ in Richmond is part of ILHAM's broader goal to contribute to the local game development scene.



This image represents the feeling we're going with by the beginning of the game.

Meet the Team

Sajid Farooq's journey has spanned over two decades, bridging technology and creativity. His career has taken him from Fortune 50 giants like Microsoft and Nike to creative powerhouses like Edgelord, along with his own startups. Now, being a global citizen himself, he's here to shape the future of entertainment, crafting immersive experiences that connect worlds and cultures.

James Rackliffe, with more than 20 years of experience at Blizzard, EA, and Rockstar, joins as ILHAM's lead designer. Some of his previous projects include Read Dead Redemption 2 and World of Warcraft. His deep industry knowledge and creativity will play a crucial role in shaping the studio's first project.

The First Game

ILHAM's debut title will be an AA open-world survival game designed to push the limits of both the genre and the players themselves. Set in a richly detailed world influenced by the rich tales of Middle Eastern and South Asian cultures such as the Arabian Nights, the game will feature unique survival mechanics, challenging combat, and a compelling narrative driven by extensive lore.

"The world is moving at an exhausting pace. People want to slow down. They want to detox from doom-scrolling and the constant dopamine rush. They need time to reflect", says Farooq.

"Every developer wants people to buy their game. For us though, the goal is to create something bigger than pure entertainment. We want to create something that stays with you long after you are done playing...Something that entertains you first and foremost, but also lets you discover deeper spiritual meaning." - Farooq adds about the project.

"Joining this team has deepened my commitment to pushing the boundaries of game development. With over 20 years in the industry, I've seen firsthand how players crave fresh

narratives that transcend the familiar. I'm thrilled to bring to life a game that delves into Middle Eastern lore—a realm of history, mysticism, and spirituality that Western games rarely explore. Working alongside such a talented team to craft a story rooted in rich culture and survival is a one-of-a-kind opportunity, and I'm excited to contribute to something truly groundbreaking." - comments Rackliffe.

The game is being developed for PC and consoles, with the release date yet to be announced, but development is already underway.

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