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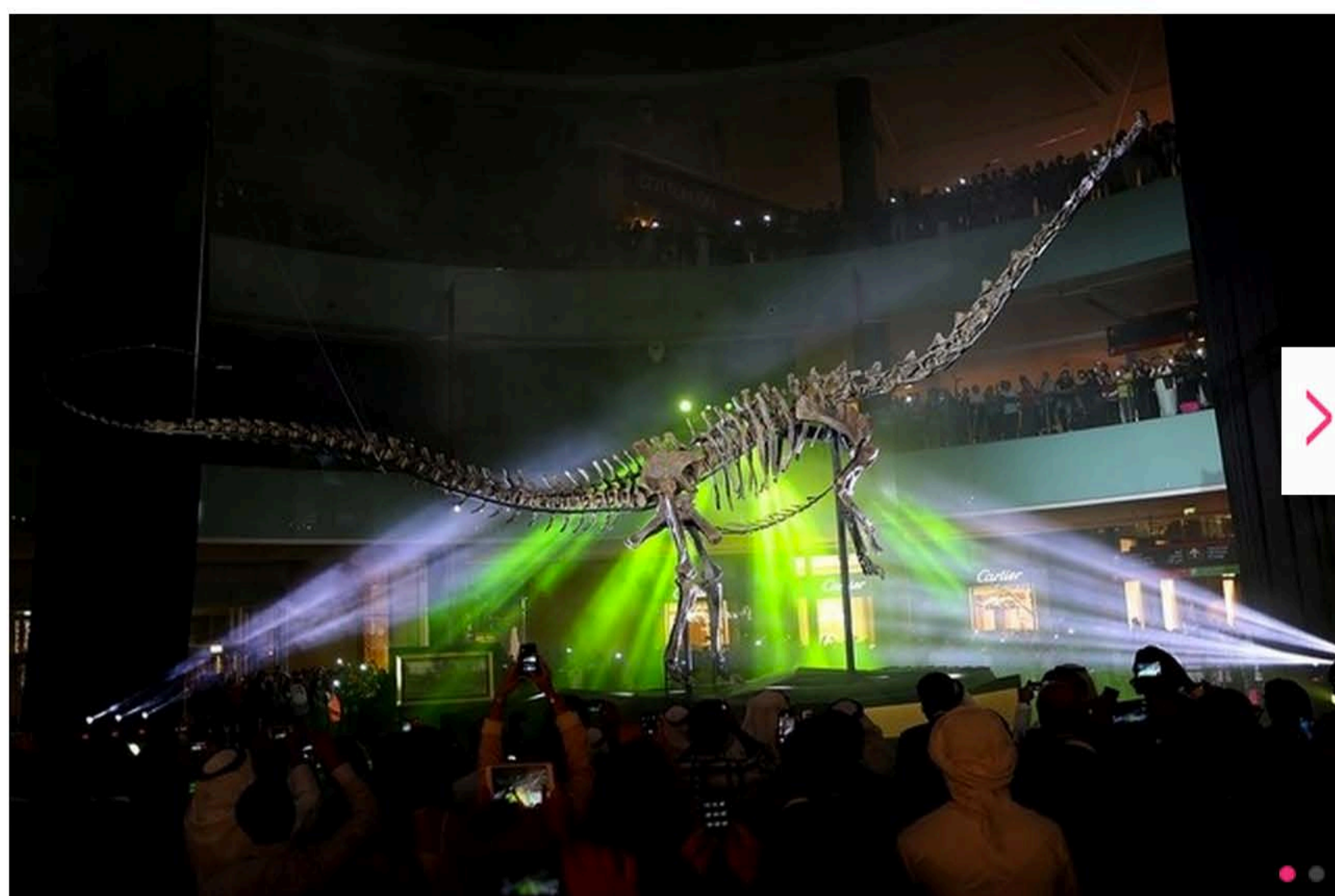
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Dubai Mall's resident dinosaur. Satish Kumar / The National

And the name of the Dubai Mall's resident dinosaur is...

Ramola Talwar Badam

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DUBAI // The emirate's oldest prehistoric resident finally has a name. The long-necked, whip-tailed dinosaur more than 155 million years old, was on Monday given the official name of DubaiDino.

The name was chosen by Johara Al Bayedh, a bank manager and Saudi national.

The 24-metre long, 7.6-metre high *Diplodocus longus* dinosaur from the late Jurassic period has been on display at Dubai Mall for the past three months.

Ms Al Bayedh chose the winning name from more than 6,000 entries in a competition on social media that used the hashtag #NameTDMDino.

"I'm a big fan of dinosaurs and I had submitted three names," said Ms Al Bayedh, a product manager with Emirates NBD who has lived in Dubai for 20 years.

"I was so excited about this that I entered instantly, and knew I had to be one of the first ones. It's just amazing to have a giant dinosaur fossil in Dubai. It is not just educational but will make people imagine how planet Earth used to function, and how the world was back then."

The prize included a trip for four to Jurassic Park at Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida, return flights and six nights in a hotel.

Ms Al Bayedh said she planned to take her sisters along on the trip.

"I've watched all the *Jurassic Park* movies, so this should be fun," she said. "It will be our first time at Universal, so we are all really looking forward to it."

Developer Emaar had unveiled the vegetarian dinosaur skeleton as a centrepiece in the mall's Grand Atrium on March 10.

It is the first sauropod skeleton comprising of actual fossil bone to be mounted in an upright position, according to the exhibit details viewed by thousands daily.

The remains of DubaiDino were discovered in 2008 at the Dana Quarry in Wyoming, US and it was flown to Dubai.

About 90 per cent of this fossil's bones are original and were found intact at the excavation site. This made it an unusual find since the last *Diplodocus longus* discovered had only 30 per cent of the original bones.

Leaflets with information about the dinosaur state: "No comparable exhibit, with nearly all bones completing the skeleton, exists anywhere. Yes, the dinosaur before you is as real as it gets and complete."

But the first incredulous reaction from onlookers is that it can't be real. "I first thought it was fake because how would you have dinosaur fossils in a mall?" asked Maria Menao, a tourist from Sydney, Australia.

Visitors posed for pictures after reading touch-screen monitors and talking to volunteers with a striking image of the sauropod's skeleton on their T-shirts.

Organisers said Ms Al Bayedh was the first to suggest the name and other participants chose similar titles, but DubaiDino emerged as the favourite.

A self-confessed dinosaur fan, she had tracked news about the Wyoming dinosaur being rehomed in Dubai since early this year.

Nasser Rafi, the chief executive of Emaar Malls, said the interest was important for the developer.

"We would like to provide visitors with memorable moments," he said.

"It's very hard to find a unique dinosaur like this and we are proud to bring it here."

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