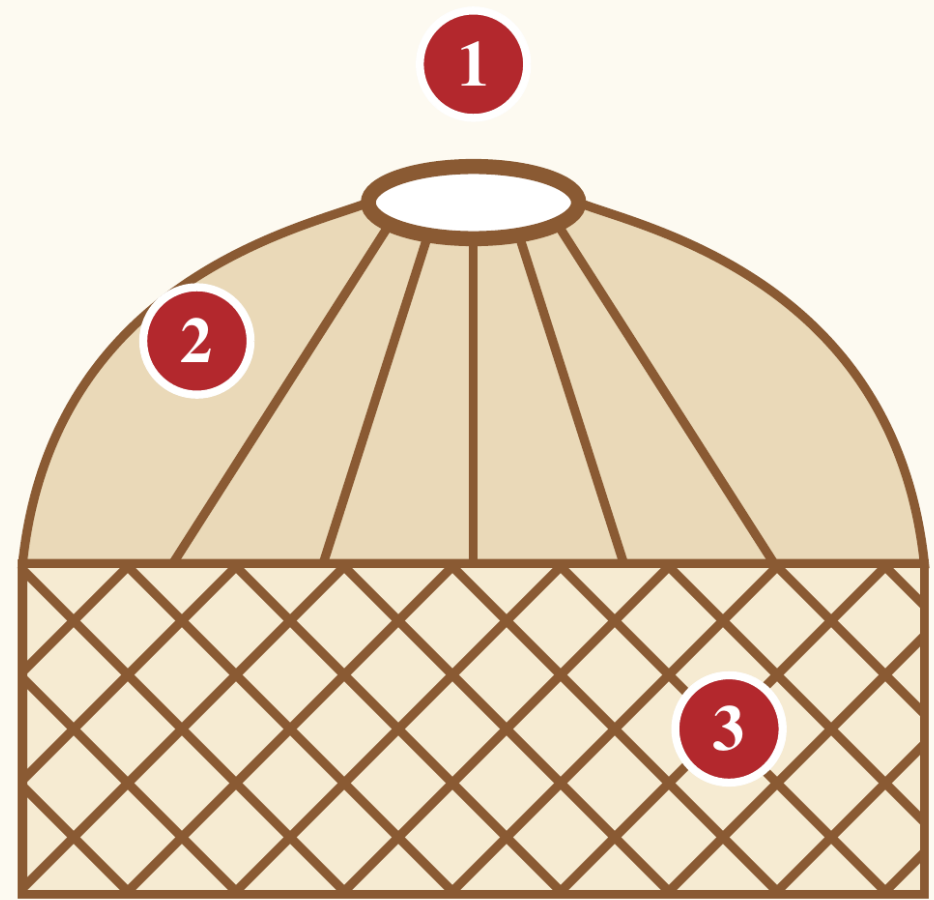


Abstract

Bishkek Arena is a new national stadium in Kyrgyzstan designed to look like a yurt, the traditional movable Kyrgyz home. I compared the two in size, materials, structure and time. The yurt’s look is kept on the outside, but concrete, steel and global stadium rules replace its structure and purpose. Heritage shifts from a way of living to a symbol of the state.

Anatomy of a yurt



- 1 **Tündük:** the roof ring
- 2 **Uuk:** the roof poles
- 3 **Kerege:** the folding lattice wall

70 m
arena height. A yurt is 3 m.

51,000
seats. A yurt shelters one family.

400 kg
weight of a whole family yurt.

From Home to Monument: What Happens When a Yurt Becomes a Stadium?

Reinterpreting Nomadic Heritage in Permanent Large-Scale Architecture: The Case of Bishkek Arena

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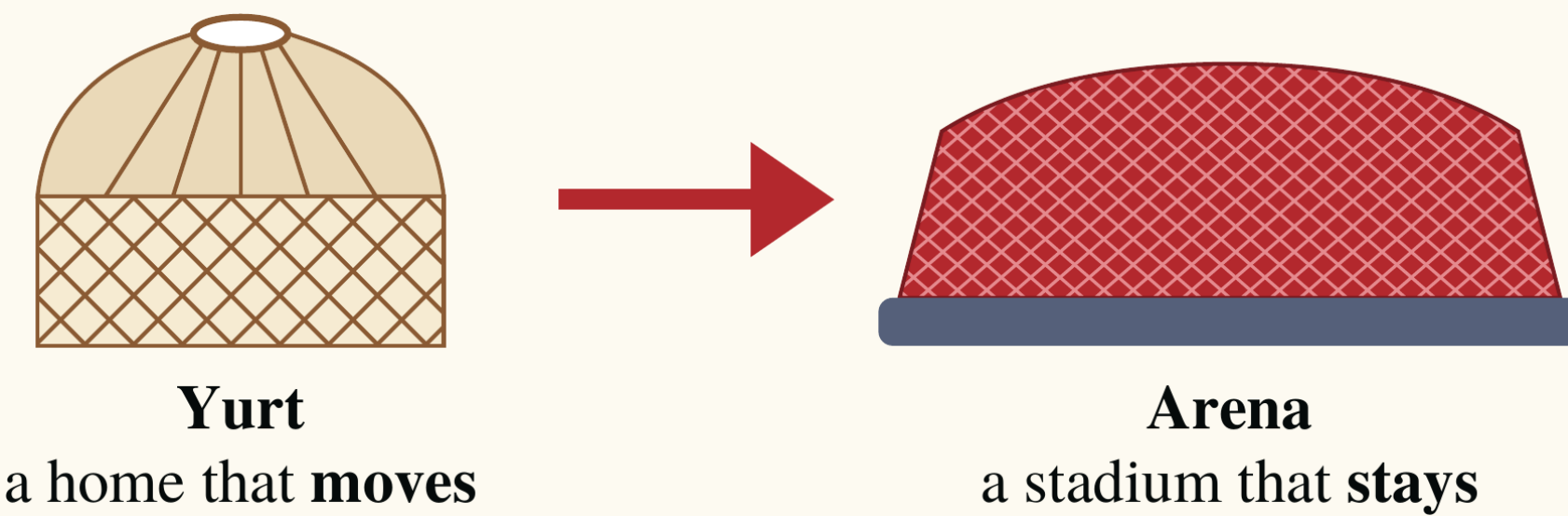
Now open: Oct 5, 2026

Introduction

For centuries, Kyrgyz nomads lived in the **yurt (boz üy)**: a round home of wood and felt that a small group can take down and set up again [1].

Today, **Bishkek Arena** stands in the capital: a 70 m tall, 51,000-seat national stadium shaped like a yurt, officially opened on October 5, 2026 [2, 3]. It hosted the opening of the 6th World Nomad Games [4].

Research question: What happens to a home built to move when it becomes a stadium built to stay?



Methods

A case study of Bishkek Arena using design drawings, renderings, official statements and news reports up to the opening [2, 5]. I compared the yurt and the stadium on four things:

 **Scale**
size and capacity

 **Materials**
wood and felt vs. concrete and steel

 **Structure**
what holds the building up

 **Time**
moved and rebuilt vs. fixed in place

Limit: This study uses design documents and reports. The arena has only just opened, so there is no visitor data yet.

Why it matters: Buildings tell a nation’s story. Who decides which parts of a culture become monuments?

Results

In a yurt, the roof ring, roof poles and lattice wall **work together to hold the home up**. In the arena, these shapes are only on the **outside**; concrete and steel do the real work.



Figure 2. Layers of the arena, from design documents.

Find the yurt! It is drawn to the same scale.

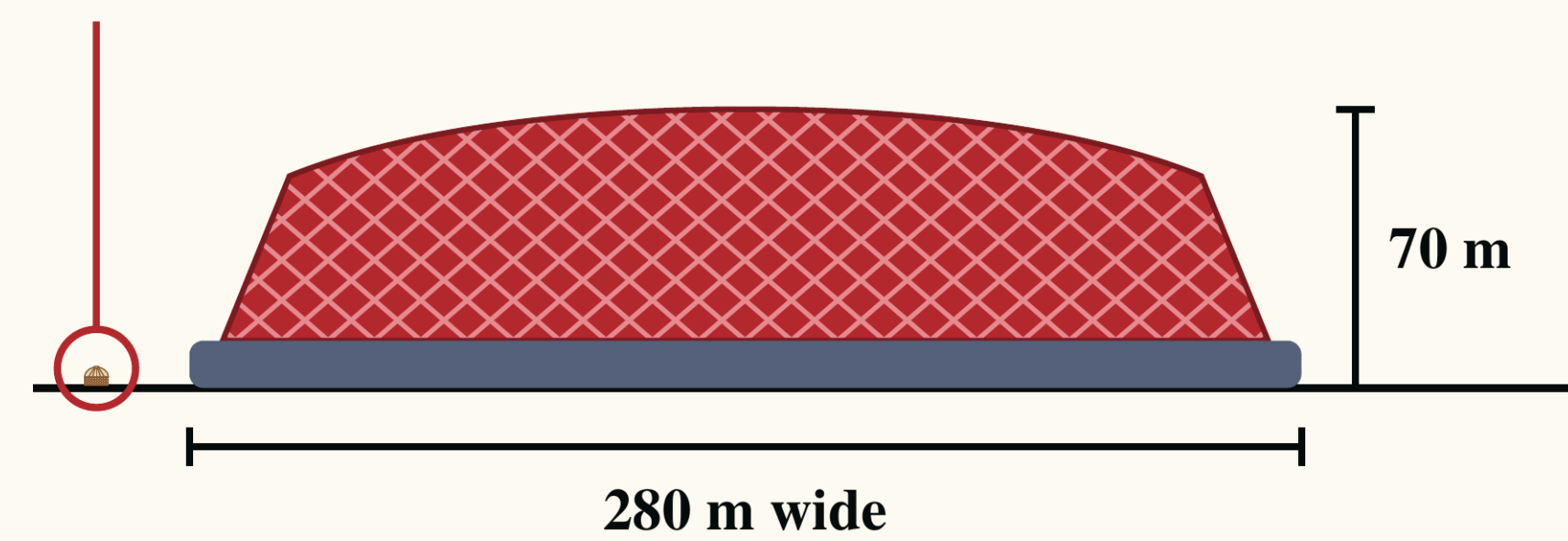


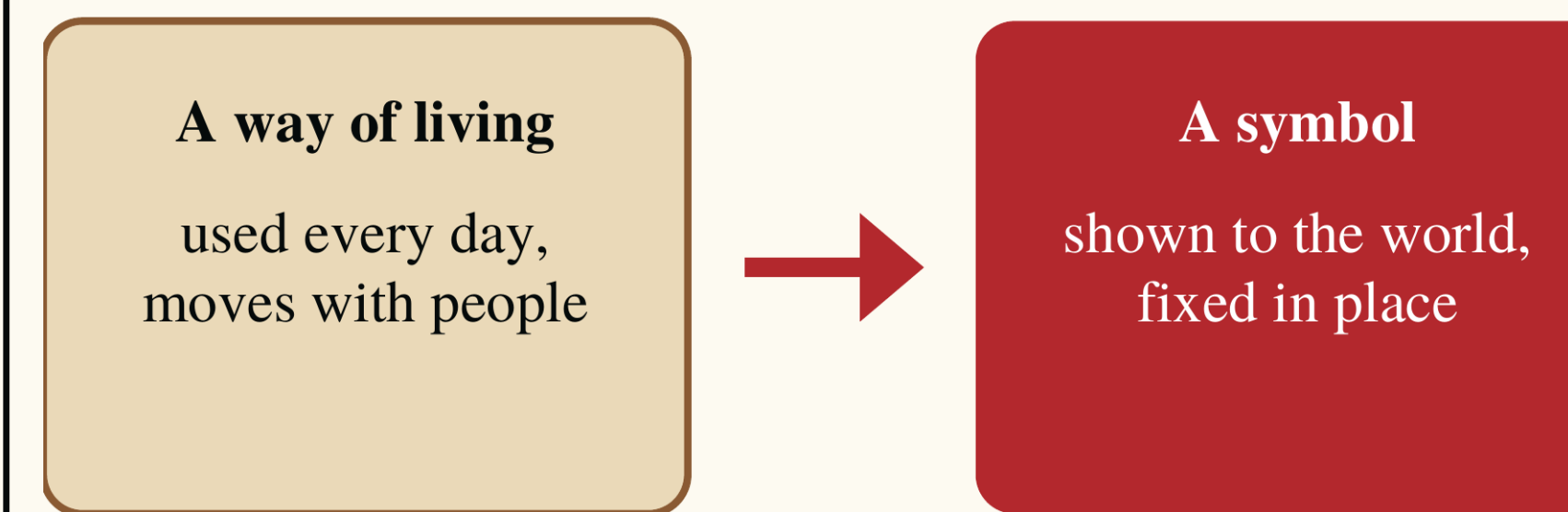
Figure 1. A yurt (3 m high) next to the arena (about 70 m high).

Feature	Yurt	Arena
Height	About 3 m	About 70 m
Floor area	About 30 sq m	About 194,000 sq m
Capacity	One family	51,000 seats
Materials	Wood and felt	Concrete and steel
Time	Moved and rebuilt	Fixed in one place

Table 1. Yurt vs. arena. Arena figures are official 2026 values [3].

Discussion

The yurt’s **look** was kept, but its **job** was not. The lattice is a “facade” [6]: a decorative outer layer, while the inside follows global stadium rules.



Conclusion

Bishkek Arena is not just an enlarged yurt. It is a **translation**: the yurt’s image stays, while its mobility, structure and purpose are replaced.

The tension: a culture built on movement is now fixed in concrete.

Next: study how people experience the stadium once it opens.

The yurt’s image stayed. Its way of life did not.

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