



Alaa Al-Zuhairi
Wins Insurance
Man Award



Pololikashvili
Nominated to
UNWTO



MoU Between ICD
and SQB Securities

BUSINESS LIFE

February 2021



Driving Excellence through Agility

Embrace growth and adaptable digitization and be more responsive toward meeting changing customer needs and business requirements



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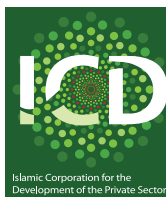
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BUSINESS LIFE

February 2021



Interview: Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies



Ghosts town: A street is empty of cars during a lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus, in Beirut



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EDITORIAL

Show Me the Vaccines

Covid-fighting vaccines are in circulation but are in short supply



The US gets ready: Navy Seaman Milan Torres, a hospitalman, prepares a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to be administered to a patient, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Md., Dec. 14, 2020. (DoD photo by Lisa Ferdinando)

While the New Year brought with it hopes for an end to the global pandemic, it is now increasingly clear that having vaccines approved does not equate to having vaccines administered to those who need it most. Most of the world is on the same boat for now, from the most advanced economies to the poorest nations. Rolling out a vaccination program is by no means a small feat. However, if the richest countries are having trouble getting their populations vaccinated it leaves less developed countries feeling helpless. To make things worse, the virus is showing no signs of letting go and quite to the contrary, it appears to be mutating and turning into an even more deadly foe.

Even richer, oil rich, countries are having a hard time competing for a limited resource – one that saves lives. We almost forgot the frailty of our existence as, many of us, indulged in cheap calories and cheap technologies. We are able to get smart phones in the hands of nearly everyone on earth but we have not given much attention to our readiness for global pandemics.

From 1918 to 1920, the Spanish flu took the lives of up to 100 million people. That number pales in comparison to the second plague that took the lives of twice as many people. Clearly time makes us forget the importance of being prepared for global pandemics. Covid-19 has already taken the lives of more than 2 million people and the number is still rising. Will we be ready the next time around? I hate to be a cynic but most governments react to public demands rather than anticipate them. Pandemic readiness, at least as far as governments are concerned, is seldom a top priority. Vaccine companies have done a fantastic job in record time but nearly all governments, with the exception of New Zealand, have failed. Even New Zealand's successes in fighting the contagion came at the expense of the economy. We need to stop losing.

Afaf Issa (Malak Issa)
Editor in Chief,



**Last issue's main story:
Turning Hope Into Reality**

The world is in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic. As WHO and partners work together on the response -- tracking the pandemic, advising on critical interventions, distributing vital medical supplies to those in need-- they are racing to develop and deploy safe and effective vaccines.

Vaccines save millions of lives each year. Vaccines work by training and preparing the body's natural defences -- the immune system-- to recognize and fight off the viruses and bacteria they target. If the body is exposed to those disease-causing germs later, the body is immediately ready to destroy them, preventing illness.

There are currently more than 50 COVID-19 vaccine candidates in trials. WHO is working in collaboration with scientists, business, and global health organizations through the ACT Accelerator to speed up the pandemic response. When a safe and effective vaccine is found, COVAX (led by WHO, GAVI and CEPI) will facilitate the equitable access and distribution of these vaccines to protect people in all countries. People most at risk will be prioritized. While we work towards rolling out a safe and effective vaccine fairly, we must continue the essential public health actions to suppress transmission and reduce mortality.

Salwa Akil
Beirut, Lebanon

Lebanon and the world should ensure that the infrastructure is in place, and the technical support available, to make sure COVID-19 vaccines can be safely delivered to all those who need them.

The entire residents of this globe are at high risk. We can say truly that life is for the fittest nowadays.

Fouad Boubez
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Priority of giving COVID-19 vaccines, to health workers who are at high risk of exposure and also the older people should be prioritized for vaccination.

But the ideal solution is to offer vaccine to the entire human beings if possible.

Henriette Fouad
Kuwait, Kuwait

LETTERS

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PAUSE *President Michel Aoun attends the Supreme Defense Council extraordinary meeting*



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Algeria

The preliminary draft organic law on elections, the first draft of which was finalized and distributed to political parties for enrichment, sets the rules for financing and monitoring electoral and referendum campaigns, including the prohibition for any candidate to receive cash or in-kind donations from a foreign state.

Bahrain

Capital Governor Shaikh Hesham bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa paid tribute to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, hailing royal directives to provide free COVID-19 vaccine to all citizens and resident in order to protect people's health and safety.

Egypt

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi stressed the importance of protecting Arab security and taking a unified stance in tackling all issues.

He made the statement as he received Arab Parliament Speaker Adel Al Asoomi in the presence of Egyptian Parliament's Speaker Dr. Hanafi Ali Jebali and Foreign Minister Sameh Shukry.

President al-Sisi reiterated Egypt's support to the Arab Parliament, stressing its pivotal role in maintaining stability and promoting the vital interests of the Arab nation.

Iran

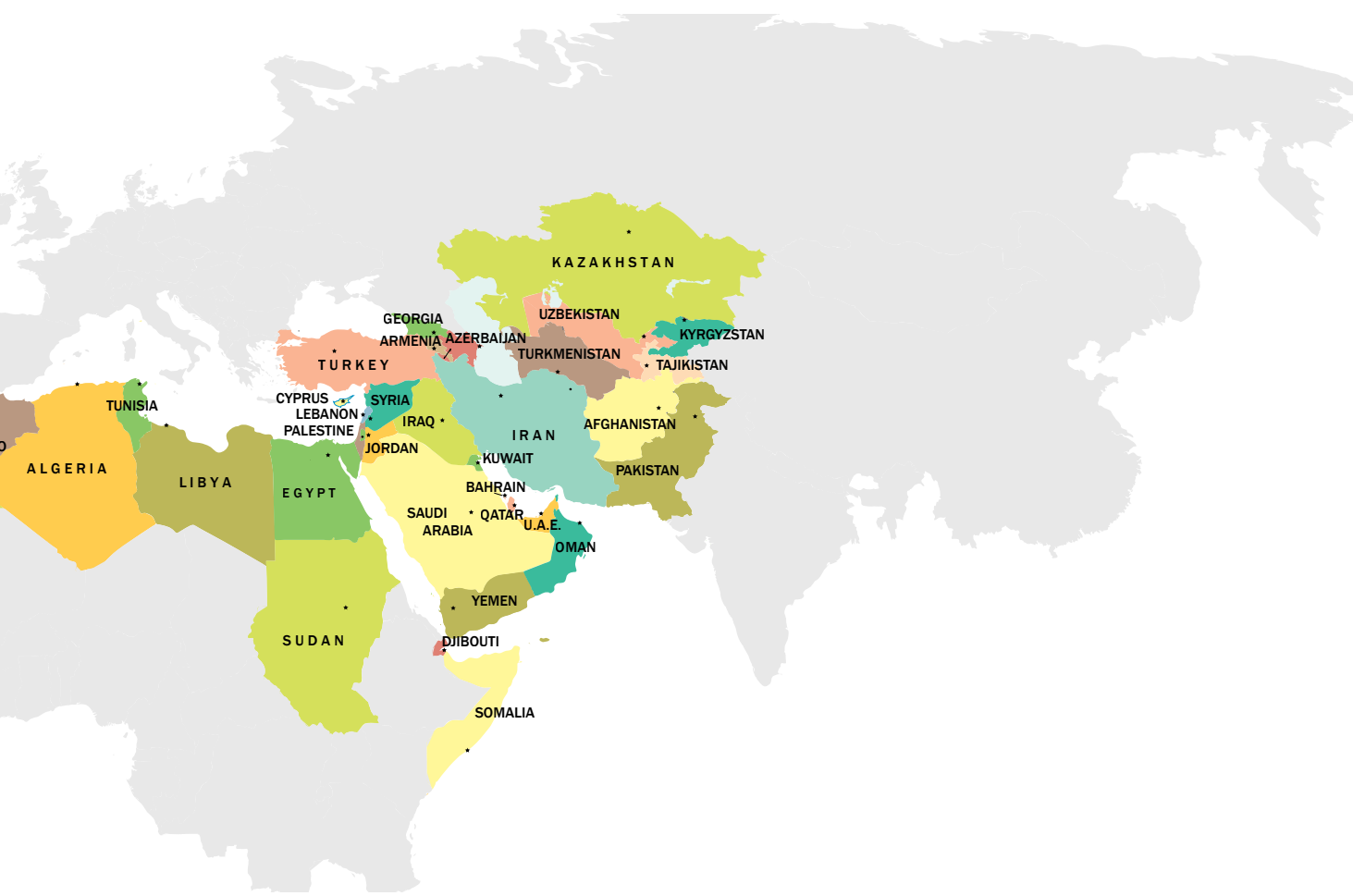
The U.S. killing of top general Qassem Iran's President Hassan Rouhani urged US President-elect Joe Biden to return to the 2015 nuclear deal and lift crippling sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

"The ball is in the U.S. court now. If Washington returns to Iran's 2015 nuclear deal, we will also fully respect our commitments under the pact," Rouhani said in a televised cabinet meeting.

"U.S. President Donald Trump's political career is over today and his 'maximum pressure' policy on Iran has completely failed," Rouhani added. —Reuters

Iraq

Iraq's oil minister affirmed Iraq's commitment to the OPEC+ reduction decision and the compensation of its overproduction



share, he said in a statement.

The minister added that Iraq has no intention to negotiate with OPEC+ members regarding its oil production share or compensation of overproduction. — Reuters

Jordan

His Majesty King Abdullah stressed the importance of bolstering cooperation between the legislative and executive branches, noting Parliament's important legislative and oversight role.

At a meeting with the Senate president, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and members of the two Chambers' permanent offices, King Abdullah stressed the importance of Parliament's Code of Conduct in enhancing public trust in the legislative authority, noting that a number of draft laws require Parliament's attention, in line with current national priorities.

His Majesty stressed Parliament's important role in building on the state's achievements, as it begins its second centennial, urging teamwork among all institutions to proceed forward in development efforts, especially on the

administrative side, to enhance the level of public services.

Kuwait

Kuwait's emir has accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Khalid al-Sabah and his cabinet, state news agency KUNA said lately.

Sheikh Sabah's cabinet will continue in a caretaker capacity until the formation of a new government, KUNA said. —Reuters

Lebanon

"A flexible and fast formula is required between Lebanon's Central Bank and pharmaceutical & medical supplies' companies related to Corona patients, as it is not permissible for the families of the infected to continue suffering in securing the needs of their patients in light of the shocking imbalance in the market, between the increasing demand and the slow import pace..."

"We are in an emergency health situation!" tweeted Democratic Gathering Member, MP Bilal Abdallah, recently.

Libya

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte Said Italy's Strategy Has Always Been Consisting With Italian Interests Of Supporting Stability In The Mediterranean, In Addition To Giving A Special Attention To Finding A Political Solution In Libya With Total Respect Of Its National Sovereignty, according to the Italian Nova news agency.

Morocco

A high-level US delegation, led by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Schenker, visited the premises of the future Consulate General of the United States in Dakhla.

The US delegation, accompanied by minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Abroad, Nasser Bourita, and the US ambassador to Morocco, David Fischer, toured the various offices of this future US diplomatic representation.

During this visit, the Wali of the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region, governor of the province of Oued Eddahab, Lamine Benomar, and the presidents of the elected councils were also present.

The US Assistant Secretary of State for

Near Eastern Affairs arrived afternoon in Dakhla, the second stop on a tour in the Moroccan Sahara after Laayoune.

The visit to Dakhla of this high-level US delegation is the result of the telephone conversation held, on December 10, 2020, between HM King Mohammed VI and US President Donald Trump who had announced the signing of a proclamation, with all that this act entails as an undeniable legal and political force and with immediate effect, on the decision of the United States of America to recognize, for the first time in its history, the full sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco over the entire region of the Moroccan Sahara.

In this regard, and as the first concrete expression of its sovereign initiative of great importance, the United States of America has decided to open a consulate in Dakhla, with a primarily economic vocation, to encourage U.S. investments and contribution to economic and social development, mainly for the benefit of the inhabitants of the southern provinces.—MAP

Oman

Oman's Sultan Haitham will be succeeded by his eldest son Dhi Yazan, according to a new basic law published that creates a new position of crown prince and establishes succession from ruler to the eldest son. Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said had announced plans for the constitutional change, a year after the death of his predecessor, Sultan Qaboos. The new basic law was published in the official gazette.

Qaboos, who took power by overthrowing his father, named his cousin Haitham as his preferred successor in a sealed envelope to be opened after his death should the royal family disagree on the succession line.

The family went with his choice. The new law also retains an elected advisory Shura Council, the lower house of parliament.—Reuters

Qatar

Qatari vehicles crossed into Saudi Arabia through a land border for the first time since Arab states severed diplomatic and transport ties with Doha in mid-2017, Saudi state TV said, following a deal this week to restore relations.

"It's good the crisis has been resolved, and the warm welcome we had, and the happiness we see in our brothers," the driver of the second car to pass through the Abu Samra-Salwa crossing told Ekhabariya TV.

Saudi Arabia announced a U.S.-backed deal to end a bitter dispute with Qatar that

saw Riyadh, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt imposed an embargo on Doha over allegations that it supports terrorism and is cosying up to foe Iran. Qatar denies the charges and says the boycott aimed at curtailing its sovereignty.

A UAE official this week said travel and trade links could resume within a week of the deal, but restoring diplomatic ties requires more time as parties work to rebuild trust.

So far no flights have resumed between Qatar and the four Arab states. Qatar Airways began re-routing some of its flights through Saudi airspace.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan discussed the ongoing Palestinian conflict and the Iranian regime's interference in regional affairs with his Jordanian counterpart at a meeting in Riyadh. — Al-Arabiya

Tunis

United Nations Resident Coordinator to Tunisia Arnaud Peral pointed out, as he visited the Tunis Afrique Press (TAP) news agency seat, on the importance of the strategic partnership between the UN organisations system and the media to "better communicate the main themes and activities achieved by the UN in Tunisia."

United Arab Emirates

The UAE will reopen its land, sea and air borders with Qatar as of January 9, 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation announced.

According to Khalid Abdullah Belhouli, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the UAE will end all measures taken against Qatar as per the statement issued on June 5, 2017, following the signing of the "AlUla Declaration".

Yemen

Yemen's Iran-backed Huthis condemned the United States' move to brand the rebels as a terrorist organisation and said they reserved the right to respond.

"These policies represent a crisis in thinking and are to be condemned, and we have the right to respond," Huthi political commander Mohamed Ali al-Huthi said in a tweet.

"The Yemeni people don't care about any designation from (US President Donald) Trump's administration as it is a partner in killing Yemenis and starving them," he added. —AFP



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Lyst Technologies (LYST) is a leading System Integrator of world-class Next-Generation business solutions. LYST develops, delivers, and supports innovative software and services that harness 21st century technologies in new and different ways to help our customers manage their organizations effectively and drive down the costs of doing business by leveraging its industry-wide experience, deep technology expertise, comprehensive portfolio of services and vertically aligned business model.

LYST operates through various locations and countries, i.e. Bahrain, India, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Tanzania, Turkey, UAE & the United Kingdom.

LYST's main focus is to empower and support the development and growth of the Global Finance industry, and in specific, the Islamic financial industry by helping the financial institutions to digitize, deliver, oversee and support them in their global technology transformation journey.

In today's world, organizations have to rapidly re-engineer and digitize themselves and be more responsive to ever-changing customer needs and business requirements. LYST is best positioned to be the technology partner and co-innovator to businesses. LYST provides leading edge Technology solutions that address the ever-changing needs and demands of the Global financial industry; being a trusted technology partner of choice for global businesses, LYST is recognized for its innovative approach towards delivering maximized business value and its commitment to continuous sustainability.

Moving forward, Naji Moukadam is the Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies. A Senior Executive with over 30 years of experience across diverse organizational domains with proven experience in driving multi-



Interview: Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies



Doing the right project: *Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies*

million-dollar growth across multiple geographies covering Europe, the Middle-East, Africa and Asia.

Naji is currently driving the development of a global go-to-market strategy that includes business development, thought leadership, global delivery and center of excellence to expand Lyst Technologies worldwide.

During his career, Naji provided several workshops and presentations, and spoke in many conferences and symposiums such as:

- The Specifications of IT Solution to Support the Growing Islamic Banking Industry at the 3rd Annual Asian Islamic Banking & Finance Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

- The International Islamic Finance Forum in Dubai.

- The Enterprise Banking Solution-Complete Integrated Solution at the MEFTEC in Manama.

- The Right Technologies for the Islamic Banking Industry at The Islamic Finance & Investment Symposium in Jakarta, and

many more.

Furthermore, Naji's core competencies covered many areas including: go-to market strategy, organization development, leadership growth & crisis management, business management and new market penetration, team management (business development, professional services, software development, client management, contract negotiation, deal closure, strategic planning, financial services as well as project management) in addition to his technology skills related to



Innovative digital solutions: *Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies*

system architect, analysis & design, solution implementation and support.

In September 2011, Naji joined SAB Group as the Managing Director at SAB International out of Dubai with the main task of developing and coordinating a comprehensive global go-to-market strategy activities for the group.

Prior to that, Naji started at Path Solutions in 1993 as a System Analyst, where he designed, architected, developed, and managed a focused Islamic banking solution in 1995. He became the Executive Vice President of system development in September 2000, where he enormously contributed to the development of the global Islamic financial technology. It is important to note, that being an advanced technology pioneer, he designed, developed, and implemented a complete mobile and internet banking solution in 2003.

In November 2004, Naji got promoted to become the group president, where he reviewed and restructured Path Solutions by developing a complete go-to-market strategy, realigned its product offerings, processes and methodologies across different departments of the organization and evolved Path Solutions into a market-led provider of solutions and services for the Islamic financial industry.

His role also covered setting up and implementing related advanced system design and system implementation strategies and processes, as well as launched a corporate academy practice focused on providing training and educational programs related to the Islamic financial technology; the academy practice offered services to the company teams and recruits, the organization clients, and across selected business schools around the world.

Prior to that, Naji served as the professional Services Director responsible for rolling out Finastra products to the different banks in Lebanon during the year of 2000 at MDSL S.A.L.

Last but not least, Naji began his career at PC Group in 1988 where he gained an in-depth knowledge and high level of expertise in developing, setting up and implementing retail banking solutions and consulting assignments and assessing the banks' set schemes within Equip bureau, a member of PC Group. Naji designed, developed, and supported various projects ranging from enterprise resource planning focusing on retail & wholesale companies, banking branch automation, and human resources. He directly conducted the support to 5 retail & wholesale institutions and one commercial bank.

Naji Moukadam holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Management Information Systems from Saint Joseph University. He attended several executive educational programs and training courses ranging from corporate development, business development, banking strategies, team management, leadership management, and an Executive Development Program - University of Pennsylvania - The Wharton School and Strategic management in Banking at INSEAD in France.

It's a really exciting time to be working in the global financial technology, and in specific the Islamic financial technology field amidst Covid-19. Recent developments will certainly help separate the good companies from the bad. Such news brings great optimism and opportunities for many financial institutions to consider digital transformation during the pandemic, moving to agile and secure financial technology solutions and services available to serve banks' community from bank executives, managers, employees, to clients, agents and so on anytime, anywhere.

People may be discouraged from using certain next-generation financial technology. Increased cautiousness regarding privacy and security isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it's encouraging that more



Expecting to see more centralization of solution-driven technology this year: *Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies*

and more people are taking precautions and becoming more aware of their online privacy. However, it is proven that these next-generation solutions and services are becoming more and more secure with the advancement of technology and its various uses.

From our own experience in the field, it certainly seems that many financial banks and institutions started considering cloud-based solutions and services, in addition to extending their own on-premise platforms onto the cloud, where such services are becoming available and more vigilant. People now have greater knowledge of what information of theirs is being stored, what it is being used for, and who it is being shared with.

Stating the above, BUSINESS LIFE Magazine has had the opportunity for an exclusive interview with the reputed Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies.

BL: What is going on with finance and tech giants recently?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Going into 2021, the rising expectations that things will soon return to normal are driving the market forward, and mainly because of the optimism of

the efficacy of COVID vaccines. However, the headlines are positive for now, but the pandemic and its unprecedented economic effects will not disappear overnight.

There are a lot of challenges with a transformational year in the industry ahead of us for sure. The need to adapt to emerging technologies such as automation and artificial intelligence has taken on a new significance, along with a renewed focus on solution-driven technology.

I expect to see more centralization of solution-driven technology this year, with a focus on the tangible benefits it provides to the industry.

When speaking of technology, these big tech giants will always be put under the spotlight. Microsoft, Amazon, Apple, SAP, IBM and Google have been the main headline recently. All companies wielded monopoly power during the pandemic, and none of them have any serious rivals today.

During the pandemic, all tech giants reacted quickly and decisively on adapting and offering cloud-services, empowering companies and employees to work from home, paving the way to a work-from-anywhere work mentality.

BL: What are your views on Synergies Banking and Financial Solutions?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Digitalization is transforming how people communicate and do business on a regular basis, and the future of financial services around the world continues to be driven by advances in banking technology. A growing demand from millennials and Generation Z for a digital banking experience is changing how the entire banking industry operates. Technology has its hand in every point of the banking industry; and the influence of technology will continue to transform banking into a digitized future. Synergies Banking Solutions embrace the growing trends of being prepared for the future. With data driven personalization, artificial intelligence and the use of high level security and protection of customer data, Synergies Banking Solutions are ahead in the race of positive evolution. Our solutions provide one of the most innovative digital transformation foundations to engage demanding customers with real-time processing engines, open banking, and embedded customer insights.

BL: How do you deal with innovative Islamic finance?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Innovative Islamic Finance is a relatively advanced concept that has been introduced into the world through new, agile, and adaptable financial technology. It is built based on the principles of Islam. Islamic finance has a wide range of applications, including the use of Islamic finance to assist with education, the alleviation of poverty, and a way to support the world's poor. There is no doubt that embracing technological advances would enable Islamic finance to fulfill its potential and provide the size, connectivity and outreach of its needs to engage with potential customers in developing countries.

BL: Naji, what are Lyst Services?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Lyst services empower the financial industry via optimized next-generation technology and services that consist of consulting, empowerment in education, outsourcing and digital marketing. Each service encompasses specialized teams that work together to enable great customer outcomes.

Outsourcing technology helps keep your company competitive, cost effective, have faster time to market, and greater flexibility. Using outsourced technology, companies will aid in adaptability, as well as help you evolve with the changing landscape.

Consultancy mainly focuses on finding the most suitable solution for any need and design the best plan for implementation. It is an important service that builds business cases, refines processes and facilitates the execution of business goals.

Empowerment in education services

provide an opportunity to make a tangible impact on any company's future. By attracting, maintaining and nurturing talent for the next decade, we make sure our recruits will have the ability to collaborate and interact with fellow workers on a global scale.

Delivery services reduce any delay, expense and reliance on internal resources, making sure you optimize value and time to market, for all prospective clients.

Digital marketing services focus on finding the most suitable solution for your specific needs and designs the best plan for implementation using search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), and social media management (SMM).

BL: What do you say on digital transformation, digital strategy, digital process and organization and digital banking architecture and governance?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Digital transformation is a broad topic that covers a number of different types of initiatives. Simply put, it is changing how a business interacts with customers and employees using technology; and also using technology to significantly improve internal processes, by making them more efficient.

There is a problem with the word digital, and it is that it's all pervasive. That could be a huge opportunity, but also a huge problem. It is very easy to get lost in the digital transformation initiatives. It is necessary, therefore, to anchor the initiatives and define some business key performance indicators (KPIs). It is about growth in sales, higher customer loyalty, and retention of customers, as well as upselling of goods. No one person can really fully lead digital transformation, because it is omnipresent in digital cuts across marketing, technology, operations and finance. Therefore, the moment that any individual attempts to lead it creates a problem.

Financial institutions started conducting digital transformation strategies during the pandemic, moving to agile and secure financial technology solutions and services available to serve banks' community from bank executives, managers, employees, to clients, agents and so on anytime, anywhere.

Digital strategy focuses on using technology to improve business performance, whether that means creating new products or reimagining current processes. It determines the direction an organization will take to create new competitive advantages with technology, as well as the strategies it will use to achieve these changes. When emerging technology makes it possible for creative businesses to offer services that were not previously possible, this typically entails improvements to business models.



Digital transformation amidst Covid-19: *Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies*

Digital transformation and digital strategy are closely related, but differ in scope. Digital transformation drives change in three areas: customer experience, operational processes and business models.

Digital strategy, on the other hand, relies on technology, not culture. It utilizes technology to create the capabilities a company needs to become a digital business. Setting down a strategy is a key component of the transition process, and ensures that technology is being applied in a way that supports the business objective.

Digital processes are a collection of multiple tasks conducted by people in a specified schedule to develop a product or service for certain customers. Internal business processes take place at every level of a company, but may not be visible to customers.

By implementing internal and external business processes, your organization should gain greater success such as greater customer satisfaction and faster ability to react to changes in your particular market. This type of organization within a company will also allow departments to work more effectively between each other.

In order to provide and procure banking services, banking architecture can be sum-

marized as the applied systems that banks use, and those that clients and employees navigate through. In order to adapt more effectively to rapidly changing market conditions, banks need a fast and efficient way to simplify their architecture.

Banks will need to identify gaps and process changes between the desired transformation state and current architecture state in order to choose the appropriate transformation approach (4):

SOA-Based Architecture: A component-based, SOA-compliant architecture can provide banks with interoperability between their core functions and reduce the cost of integration. Working with a shared service landscape would also contribute to creating an infrastructure that will comply with the current and future needs of banks.

Progressive Simplification: Banks can opt for incremental simplification instead of fully overhauling core legacy systems, preferring selective customizations that will provide them with competitive advantages without altering all legacy products. However, banks will have to decide if the transition package supports country-specific regulatory policies and accounting standards for bank-specific business processes.

Core banking on the Cloud: To leverage



Timely planning: Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies

various pricing choices, banks can opt for a cloud-based solution to host processes, software, networks, or infrastructure. This strategy could result in some risk transfer to the bank as the cloud service provider would manage functions such as disaster recovery and data storage.

Pre-integrated Complete Banking Ecosystem: For banks, another option is to provide a capacity-driven simplification strategy for their banking architecture. Such an approach allows banks to reinvent their process of architectural design by choosing capabilities that as a pre-integrated banking ecosystem are available on the market. This is preferably achieved through a subscription-based model.

BL: How do you implement cost reduction with digitization?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Digital transformation is altering business models, developing new services that generate revenue and, most importantly, reducing costs that can be achieved by digitizing manual business processes.

Applying digital transformation tools to traditional, labor-intensive internal activities will lead to tremendous savings, efficiencies and enhanced risk manage-

ment. This is particularly true in financial services, where Robotic Process Automation (RPA), also known as digital labor, is being embraced by a few larger companies for manually intensive, repetitious activities, the kind that have been sent offshore in the past to achieve labor arbitrage. The potential for cost savings through all sorts of business processes may be greater than the digital transformation's potential for new revenues. In regulatory and compliance reporting, Robotic Process Automation has tremendous potential, particularly to reduce costly errors in that process and in financial reconciliation, specifically to close the gaps between non-straight-through-processing systems. Technology now available enables financial institutions to automate many operational computer-based activities, such as scanning, matching, comparing, filing, and more. This will free workers to do work of greater value.

If implemented effectively, RPA can be an important investment. Among the reasons:

Quick time to market: Automation can be applied easily, even more quickly than finding the right person to do it.

Quick paycheck: The program itself is inexpensive and there can be substantial incremental savings. Paycheck for such

operations and procedures can be as fast as six to nine months.

Easily scalable: Technology can be applied to tackle seasonal operations (data remediation or high business activity periods).

Complement other initiatives: Can be introduced in combination with other exercises for process improvement or initiatives for location strategy to maximize capacity free-up.

BL: What are the synergies cloud solutions that boost financial institutions' performance, simplify their operations, increase their reach and ascertain their compliance across the whole Islamic financial value chain?

NAJI MOUKADAM: The way we do banking is evolving rapidly through financial technology or FinTech. FinTech continues to influence every aspect of global banking, whether it is lending, payments, mobile banking or even capital markets. While Islamic banking is still relatively new (due to constraints on Islamic banking as well as lower capital financing), there is a growing interest in this field of finance. In addition to Synergies on-premise solutions, Lyst Technologies extended its offerings on-cloud. Islamic FinTech's greatest boost comes from solutions that can be implemented on-cloud or on-premise, focused on branchless banking, crowdfunding, agency banking and microfinance.

Factors that promote the growth of Islamic banks' solutions include:

- The rise of Islamic banking in markets with a high number of unbanked individuals. In these regions, Islamic banking FinTech solutions could be used very efficiently to meet unbanked customers.

- Islamic banks usually have higher operating costs in contrast to non-Islamic banks. Using FinTech channels could make banking more efficient by lowering the cost of providing banking solutions to the unbanked.

- Increasing internet, mobile and smartphone penetration in markets with Islamic banking supports the growth of Fintech models to provide banking solutions

- The lack of Islamic investment options available to investors makes it difficult, costly, and inefficient to create a sharia-compliant investment portfolio. Smarter use of technology, however, could be used very well to screen all available investments at a fraction of the cost.

BL: What are your long-term goals, did you achieve them, and how?

NAJI MOUKADAM: To say that the world has changed would be an understatement. The way we work, learn, and interact is completely different today. As a CEO, I

need to see the whole context in which the company works, consider numerous forces at play, set a broad vision, and be the final voice on various decisions. In my particular industry and situation, my objective is to figure out the best way forward.

Some long-term goals include:

- Have close links to all stakeholders.
- Growth via stakeholders and partners.
- Be able to develop a team of talented, diverse and driven individuals who will be as excited as I am about preparing for the future.
- Continuous learning at the center of all things.
- Build a community that is collaborative, confidence-based and risk-tolerant.
- Have a common and convincing vision.
- Clear and well-understood strategy.
- Strong and sustainable performance on all levels.

BL: What has been your biggest challenge, and how did you overcome it?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Innovation in financial technology is consistently disrupting the status quo and driving growth while existing providers do all they can to keep up. Financial technology, within traditional organizations and modern start-ups, is improving and automating how financial services are provided and used. These challenges have been pushing our imagination in new ways, and like most developing industries, the challenges have been tough. Building trust with users and getting early users on board has been a challenge, especially in disruptive technology. From eliminating data breaches, to keeping up with regulations, and even organizing big data are all challenges we face on a daily basis. Not only do we have to convince consumers to trust our brand, but also have to argue that our product is crucial. By interacting directly with our users, we have improved our relationship and gained their trust. Creating an authentic, agile, and informative online experience for our customers has built positive, lasting relationships.

BL: How important is company culture to you and what measures do you take to maintain your desired culture?

NAJI MOUKADAM: A winning company culture has always shown to improve levels of employee engagement, productivity and performance. Company culture is defined as the values, ideals, attributes and goals that characterize an organization. From establishing a brand identity to uniting coworkers and increasing employee engagement, a healthy company culture can have a huge positive impact on your organization. Corporate culture is maintained by finding

ways to measure how transparency and trust flows in the organization, have an out-of-office team building, create core values and highlight people who live up to them, get to know your employees, keep people interested, keep communicating, and keep your employees happy and loyal.

BL: What are your values as a company leader? How do you ensure these values are upheld by employees?

NAJI MOUKADAM: It is really important to identify and improve your core leadership values. Understanding what leadership values are and what core leadership values you want to adopt into your leadership style can help you improve your relationship with your team, thus becoming a more effective leader. Leadership values are important because they help you determine how you want to achieve your goals and what type of leader you want to be.

Stating some values as a company leader include influence, vision, honesty, passion, integrity, dedication, empathy, personal development, respect, authenticity and many more.

Companies have to encourage employees to "act like owners" in their interactions with customers, since they are handed over the company's vision, mission, values, and culture.

Empowerment, training, recognition, support and rewards all play a role in ensuring company values are upheld by employees.

BL: What features make a good leader?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Leadership is defined as a process of individual influence on a group of individuals aimed at the achievement of individual and/or common goals of the group or the organization. Without the two elements together, leader and follower leadership ceases to exist.

Leadership is persuading and convincing people to go the extra mile in achieving the organization's goals. They help set the direction the employees should follow to achieve the vision of the organization. In addition to that, leaders help increase business performance and productivity through motivating the employees and setting performance objectives the employees should accomplish. A technical leader does more than direct and troubleshoot technical issues with software, hardware and mobile applications. He will also manage your technical team. Good direction involves honesty, integrity and the ability to inspire teamwork, promote productivity and delegate tasks without being condescending. A technology leader wears multiple hats and always plays an important strategic

role within every organization, as the marketplace and world becomes increasingly automated, tailored, and complex.

To list a few features:

- Confidence, Inspiration, ability to communicate the vision and values, establish the right culture in the organization, honesty, integrity and transparency. Commitment, humility, as well as learning from failure and experiences as a whole.

BL: Would you describe yourself as good leader?

NAJI MOUKADAM: One does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent.

BL: How does LYST enable banks to better connect and communicate with each other and their clients, to deliver both improved profitability and client service whilst reducing operational risk and costs?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Customer communication and expectations are not static and will continue to evolve and expand across all industries, especially banking. Because of the complexity of mobile-first offerings and the secure handling of sensitive data, to swift and seamless integration, financial organizations that want to develop new services often need the expertise of external partners to both access what needs to be improved and which approach is the best to meet the needs of customers.

Extending Synergies Banking Platforms to address banking and financial institutions' specific needs through end-to-end solutions, vertical modules and add-ons enable banks to better connect and communicate with each other and their clients.

By recognizing the need for such change, Synergies is designed to work with banks to create a range of digital products and services, either as a whole Platform or through individual modules for key parts of the customer onboarding process, with an API based on open banking designed for simple integration with other systems for maximum flexibility.

Synergies Banking Solutions are deployed via a premise-based or cloud-based delivery model. Cloud offers a scalable, manageable technology model that cuts IT hardware, maintenance and development investment, which makes it the ideal deployment choice for a many Banks and financial institutions that are not hampered by intricate IT systems. The ability to use Synergies Cloud Solutions enables banks and financial institutions to have access to a highly secure, always-on, industry-leading Islamic banking and financial technology solutions, without the need for significant internal IT resources and expensive infrastructure of their own. The wide range of cloud-based Islamic financial solutions

provide end-to-end banking solutions for different needs such as: Omnichannel Banking Cloud, Core Banking Cloud, Window Cloud, Digital Banking Cloud, SME Banking Cloud, Consumer Financing Cloud, Investment Banking Cloud, Microfinance Cloud, Crowd-funding Cloud and Treasury Cloud.

BL: How do you deliver innovative solutions to the Islamic finance market, specifically in the area of asset and liability management?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Asset and Liability Management (ALM) is a technique used to reduce financial risks arising from asset and liability mismatches by financial institutions. ALM techniques use a mix of risk management and financial planning and are often used by businesses to address long-term uncertainties that could occur because of changing conditions. Financial institutions are left with a surplus which can be effectively utilized to optimize their investment returns and improve profitability by successfully balancing assets against liabilities.

In addition to the aforementioned, Lyst Technologies, in cooperation with Connec-tif built a focused Islamic trading platform, iWAVE, to connect the Islamic institutions to their counterparts through one central platform. Allowing master agreements to be negotiated, trades to be executed, and all post trade processes to be undertaken across the whole Islamic finance asset and liability product range.

Because Islamic banking depositors are taking part in the bank's benefits, Islamic banking follows to maximize benefits to beneficiaries and among them depositors. Islamic banking works side by side with traditional banks in many markets, supplying potential consumers with all product options. In many markets, the population could theoretically prefer conventional banking to Islamic banking. Crowd-funding, microfinance and agency banking are supporting the growth of Islamic banking with the help of factors such as:

- Spread of Islamic banking across areas with a high % of unbanked people.
- Islamic banks tend to have higher operating costs than non-Islamic banks.
- The Use of Islamic FinTech could make banking efficient by lowering the cost of providing banking solutions to the unbanked.

- Rising internet, mobile, and smartphone penetration in markets with Islamic banking supports the growth of FinTech models to provide banking solutions.

-The lack of Islamic investment choices available to investors makes the process of constructing a sharia-compliant investment portfolio difficult, costly, and inefficient. Smarter use of technology, however, could

be used very well to screen all available investments at a fraction of the cost.

BL: How do you build rapport with your workers? Why do you think this is effective?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Getting to know your team is critical to any business owner. You need to understand their motivations and drivers if you want to get the most out of everyone. The team will not all respond to the same exact things, so the more you can get to know each of them uniquely, the better the relationship will be. Simply asking your employees for their perspective of things will be enough to delight people and stand out as a good manager/business owner.

You can build rapport with your employees by asking work related questions, but questions that are not directly related to work are more effective, such as: what are your hobbies or interests outside work, what do you like to do when not working, where did you grow up, what's your favorite place you've ever visited, and why?

Everyone's favorite subject is talking about themselves. Some people will be more private than others, so trying out different topics will help find something that they really want to discuss. Looking and listening carefully to see what they show more excitement about, and showing you are genuinely interested in their answers will help you build a proper rapport.

BL: What are your current and ideal work/life balance? What measures do you take to control the work/life balance of yours and your employees?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Balancing your professional and personal life can be challenging, but it's essential. Creating a harmonious work-life balance is critical, though, to improve not only our physical, emotional and mental well-being, but it is also important for our career.

Better use of technology enables people to respond to problems more effectively and efficiently. It allows for a response from wherever they are. Despite this, it hinders time spent with family but enables quality time.

Letting go of perfectionism, unplugging once home, exercising and meditating, limiting time-wasting activities and people, changing the structure of my life, and starting small are all measures I take for a better work/life balance.

BL: How safe is our financial information online? What kind of information has been and can be leaked without warning?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Financial service organizations, now more than ever before, are striving to understand how to fully operate in the cloud and to recognize the potential security challenges cloud computing can present if

not properly secured and leveraged. Investing in a solution that automates security policy compliance in the public cloud will give you visibility into your distributed cloud environment, while ensuring your cloud environment is compliant. Such a solution continually scans your infrastructure in order to detect misconfigurations, as well as actively enforcing security best-practices, and remediating violations automatically before they even become risks.

The goal of software security is to maintain the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information resources that enable successful business operations. This goal is achieved through the implementation of security measures. To implement the appropriate security measures, there are a few key questions we need to ask ourselves:

- What are we trying to protect?
- Why are we trying to protect it?
- How will we protect it?

Based on these questions, Synergies was built and is being continually enhanced using the best market practices to provide the most possible secure platform and cover security measures that minimize and even eliminate many cases related to security threats. These implemented measures cover the full spectrum of the software development cycle, from designing the product to releasing it and includes, but not limited to design and development, application security risks, data validation and full audit and audit log, access configuration and control, as well as data layer isolation.

BL: Are our personal details, email addresses, passwords, and financial details secure?

NAJI MOUKADAM: One of the main concerns that come up when considering financial cloud compliance is that customers do not manage their own IT infrastructure. That is why it is important to stress the fact that cloud compliance is a two way street. Financial service organizations have a contractual obligation to their clients but clients must rely on best practices and regulations to look out for their interests as well. In other words, a specific provider, be it on-cloud through SaaS (Software as a Service) or on-premise through PaaS (Product as a Service) will offer certain compliance and security features, but it is up to the client to responsibly implement those features. Whether the firm chooses a private cloud or public cloud, compliance guidelines must be met to ensure optimal security.

Financial technology solutions should cover the full spectrum of the software development cycle, from designing the product to releasing it and includes, but not limited to, design and development, application security risks, data validation and full

audit and audit log, access configuration and control, as well as data layer isolation.

BL: What is your philosophy of management when you are leading a team in the technical field?

NAJI MOUKADAM: The only way to successfully manage a technical team is to take on full responsibility and serve as the intermediary between each member of the team. You don't have to do this yourself, just make sure everything goes smoothly and on schedule. Your job is to organize all data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Allowing the whole team to understand and address clients' priorities, and putting ourselves in their shoes will open our eyes to opportunities we could not see before, from a different perspective.

Providing the team with the necessary tools for project delivery will allow you to get the best out of each tech genius. Reward employees for their hard work, since tech geniuses are more particular about getting credit for every single obstacle they overcome, in comparison to a business team that is mostly tempted by power and money.

Informing the team about customer feedback will help the technical team understand what step to take in order to improve product delivery.

BL: How would you resolve a conflict with a technician who did not value your ideas on a project?

NAJI MOUKADAM: I have always worked hard to empower my team to take a more proactive role in my business, listening to what they have to say about new ideas, better ways of doing business and taking high levels of effort to improve the organization as a whole. People want to be heard and feel valued. Having a company culture where people will bring their ideas to work has been associated with many important outcomes in areas such as productivity, employee engagement, retention and innovation.

In the real world, conflict in the workplace is inevitable. Avoiding conflict or mismanaging it comes at a high cost to organizations. Essential qualities I have been developing over the course of my years to deal with employees have taught me to always listen, detach from my own biases, focus on behavior, and try to understand why things were done the way they were in order to address and seek a resolution to the problem quickly.

BL: What technical projects have you worked on in the past that excited you, and why?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Throughout my 30 year career, every project I took on excited me in its own way, but there was one specific project with a challenging scope. Having to conduct an exciting digital transformation strategy



A willingness to address problems promptly: Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies

for one of the most prestigious banks that was at the forefront of technology in the Gulf region.

The bank wanted a hybrid model with the best of breed solution implementation, while maintaining operation during rollouts over various components and solutions. The implementation process was very unique, in all aspects ranging between technology, solution, and functionality.

BL: Where do you go to find your favorite sources to study technical innovations?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Innovation has become the buzzword of the industry in the 21st century. From business to other areas everywhere innovation is being talked of. Several emerging businesses have proved that innovation can be the way to the top. Amazon, Google and Facebook are proof of it.

Participating and subscribing to many innovation blogs and websites to read on a daily basis such as Harvard Business Review, Idea to Value, MIT Technology Review, TechCrunch, CNET, Innovation Excellence and Innovation Management all include in-depth analysis from serious experts and academics, wonderful case studies of big name businesses, as well as looks at specific skills like creativity, leadership, and curiosity that will help you stay ahead of the competition

and market.

BL: What is the role you feel technology plays in our industry amidst Covid-19?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Technology has played a major role in responding to Covid-19. Throughout the pandemic, technology has answered the call for a new form of public health that illustrates opportunities for enhanced agility, scale and responsiveness. Technology like chatbots and virtualized patient care offer a mechanism to triage and distribute care at scale. AI and high performance computing have accelerated research into understanding the virus and developing targeted therapeutics to treat infection and prevent transmission. In response to public concerns, new mobile contract tracing protocols were created that protect patient privacy and civil liberties, providing new opportunities for privacy-sensitive technology to support efforts to prevent and monitor outbreaks. Although much progress is still needed, the importance of technology for public health protection and pandemic preparedness has been highlighted by Covid-19. By recognizing that we should highlight the role of technology and continue to explore ways to complement and strengthen conventional approaches has proven to be a huge advantage to us,



Famous managing tech giants: *Naji Moukadam, Managing Director and CEO at Lyst Technologies*

making it clear that we are on the right path in innovation as lessons from the current pandemic are assessed.

BL: What would you bring to this role that others wouldn't?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Over the past 10 years,

business organizations, developments in technology, and globalization of the world's economies have changed the end game for many business organizations. CEOs are under tremendous pressure to remain agile in a dynamic business environment where regulations and procedures are continually

changing.

There is no denying that CEOs are accountable to their board of directors, business owners, and shareholders. With the company's current and potential success on the line, it is really important on each and every CEO to create their own value.

To name a few:

- Recruiting top talent: Being able to effectively communicate the company's vision and how each employee fits into bringing the vision to life will encourage top candidates to join the team.

- Defining the right metrics: Understanding the need for the organization to have a solid reputation, integrity and a strong presence in local communities.

- Thinking outside the box to motivate employees: Recognizing the importance of an engaged and spirited staff from top to bottom will optimize contribution and allow their unique set of expectations to prosper.

- Establishing a global presence: Understanding different cultures and addressing the uniqueness of each one through the goods and services that are being offered by the company will allow for a successful functioning across international borders.

- Partner empowerment: The goal is to ensure partners have access to data that is streamlined and intuitive. With easy and immediate access to information anytime, anywhere, companies and partners can spend more time building a sustainable partnership.

- Incorporating modern technology into the business model: To successfully be able to compete, companies need to direct the organization into the cyber-market where customers from countries all over the world have access to the company's goods and services.

BL: What are the key challenges and approaches to compliance?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Compliance is complicated and expensive to manage, and are usually created in response to a specific event – a new regulation, criminal investigation, etc – with little thought to how it all works together.

The main challenges facing compliance are based on the pace of change and level of uncertainty we are experiencing. The increasing use of technology, and the emphasis being placed on “why” or “how” a business is being conducted, beyond just the “what”, are also pressure points.

The first main approaches facing compliance is through establishing frameworks, policies, training and empowerment to the team on how to better engage with their counterparts, clients, and partners. The second main approach to facing compliance

is through our Synergies Banking Platform that provides vertical solutions and modules to address bank compliance requirements across all banking activities and services.

BL: What are your approaches to managing technology change?

NAJI MOUKADAM: Employers need to employ tailored communication campaigns that utilize various delivery channels and include consumer-like context experiences to communicate with today's diverse, mobile-enabled staff.

It is obvious that organizations do not use the right resources or techniques to help their workers understand and implement new ideas and practices, especially in today's digital workplace, where employees live in a noisy environment in which conflicting interests are constantly communicated. Too much data and too much one-size-fits-all messaging makes employees feel overwhelmed and limits their engagement with communications of strategic change. In order to connect in today's diverse, mobile-enabled workers, employers need to employ targeted communication campaigns that leverage multiple delivery channels and provide consumer-like context experiences.

BL: What do you feel is most important for IT, enable-

ment for innovation?

NAJI MOUKADAM: There is no proven formula for success, particularly when it comes to innovation. The pace of change has gone into hyper-speed in the digital age, so businesses must get their strategic, innovative, executive, and organizational factors right to innovate successfully. No single tool or method will yield reliable, profitable breakthroughs, nor will a series of practices that are misaligned or poorly integrated. It takes a systematic approach to build systematic capability. Skills, tools, metrics, processes, platforms, incentives, roles, and values all have to come together to produce a winning innovation machine.

It is important to have what it takes to take the right decisions in order to embrace innovation completely, while making sure not to inherit the burdens of outdated legacy systems while you are thinking about innovation. Thinking outside the box, and finding innovative ways to rebuild outdated systems rather than patch up and migrate them.

BL: What is your approach to stakeholder relationship building?

NAJI MOUKADAM: In order to resolve transitions in unpredictable organizational environments, effective organizations rely

on stakeholder perceptions, reports on the social and environmental effects of operations, the prevalence of civic advocacy, globalization, emerging problems and conflicts, and the need to be good corporate citizens through ethical and socially responsible actions.

Anyone who has an interest in your idea, operation, product or service is a stakeholder. Customers, project managers, outside regulators, VPs, senior management or even co-workers may be part of this. I believe it is extremely important to establish relationships with stakeholders and should be thought of as a subject that stands on its own.

The number one reason for building relationships with stakeholders, in my opinion, is to prepare for the unexpected. When unexpected issues arise without a relationship, it gives sponsors the feeling that you're inept. On the other hand, when unexpected issues arise with a relationship, sponsors have a feeling of confidence. If you build a good relationship, it becomes easier to have open honest conversations with your stakeholders. They will listen to your opinion and allow for flexibility in meeting project goals. Last but not least, building good relationships with stakeholders will secure you a promise of future projects.

The Race For A COVID-19 Vaccine

US\$34 million in emergency financing will provide access to vaccines for over 2 million people in Lebanon

As Lebanon registers new records in the daily surge of COVID-19 infections and after the Lebanese government has declared a health emergency, UN Lebanon and partners call on individuals and all sectors to strictly abide by the lockdown and preventive measures.

Despite continued efforts by many individuals, families, communities, public and private services, businesses and industries that have been applying preventive measures since February 2020, the number of cases has increased to the extent that ICU beds are no longer available in Beirut and 1,705 people have lost their lives, out of 226,948 cumulative cases, as of 12 January 2021. The increase was primarily driven by a significant increase in social gatherings during the holiday season, such as restaurants, crowds at bars, weddings, shopping malls and elsewhere. COVID-19 is a deadly disease impacting the health of individuals, their livelihoods and the economy. It will only decrease if individuals and all public and private sectors abide by preventive measures strictly and consistently.

Typically, many vaccine candidates will be evaluated before any are found to be both safe and effective. For example, of all the vaccines that are studied in the lab and laboratory animals, roughly 7 out of every 100 will be considered good enough to move into clinical trials in humans. Of the vaccines that do make it to clinical trials, just one in five is successful. Having lots of different vaccines in development increases the chances that there will be one or more successful vaccines that will be shown to be safe and efficacious for the intended prioritized populations.

There are three main approaches to designing a vaccine. Their differences lie in whether they use a whole virus or bacterium; just the parts of the germ that triggers the immune system; or just the genetic material that provides the instructions for making specific proteins and not the whole virus.

The World Bank today approved a

re-allocation of US\$34 million under the existing Lebanon Health Resilience Project to support vaccines for Lebanon as it faces an unprecedented surge in COVID-19, with record-breaking numbers of around 5,500 daily confirmed cases since the beginning of the year. This is the first World Bank-financed operation to fund the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines. The financing will provide vaccines for over 2 million individuals. The vaccines are expected to arrive in Lebanon by early February 2021.

In addition to the human toll, the pandemic is exacerbating the economic crisis in the aftermath of the Port of Beirut explosion last August. This vaccine rollout will target priority groups: high risk health workers, population above 65 years of age, epidemiological and surveillance staff, and population between 55-64 years with co-morbidities. By prioritizing these groups, the country's vaccination program has the potential to reduce the consequences of the pandemic, even in conditions of supply constraints.

"Fair, broad, and fast access to COVID-19 vaccines is critical to protecting lives and supporting economic recovery," said World Bank Group President David Malpass. "This is an important first operation and I look forward to continuing our support to many more countries in their vaccination efforts. Our goal remains to mitigate the impact of the pandemic in order to save lives and improve livelihoods."

This latest support for Lebanon draws on World Bank's previous work supporting vaccination efforts over the decades, including polio, measles and Ebola. It combines financing, global expertise, and in-country experience across sectors to build more resilience, ahead of future health emergencies.

The country's health sector is severely overstretched. As of January 17, 2021, the country had a total of 252,812 confirmed cases and 1,865 deaths. Test positivity rate for the last 14 days is high at 17 percent (compared to the WHO suggested maximum rate of 5 percent).

In preparing for vaccine deployment,



Ghosts town: A street is empty of cars during a lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus, in Beirut, Lebanon, Friday, Jan. 15, 2021. AP Photo/Bilal Hussein

the Government of Lebanon, with the support of the World Bank and other partners, has conducted the COVID-19 vaccine readiness assessment, established a National COVID-19 Vaccine Committee, and prepared a draft National COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan (NVDP). The draft NVDP has all the key elements recommended by the World Health Organization and represents a central part of Lebanon's vaccination readiness.

The NVDP will also include key readiness actions, namely: the development of the sub-plan for vaccine deployment; the most critical regulatory actions for vaccine rollout; the development of an online system for pre-registration of eligible priority groups; the development and dissemination of Standard Operating Procedures for vaccine storage, distribution and delivery; training and supervision of vaccinators and ensuring grievance reporting mechanisms related to COVID-19 vaccination. A public communication campaign will also be launched to provide the population with information on eligibility, vaccination sites, timing, vaccine safety and efficacy.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak in the country, the World Bank had in March 2020 allowed the same Lebanon Health Resilience Project to help strengthen the Ministry of Public Health's capacity to respond to the COVID-19 crisis by equipping public hospitals and increasing their ability to test

and treat suspected cases. Fast track procurement through local and international suppliers, following World Bank procedures and in coordination with UN agencies, has since helped procure critically needed goods and equipment to 45 hospitals. These included Personal Protective Equipment, 60 ventilators, 10 PCR machines and testing kits. In addition, 50 Intensive Care Units (ICU) were equipped with ICU beds and their associated equipment including vital signs monitors, syringe pumps, suction pumps, infusion pumps, defibrillators, and ECG machines. The procurement of additional goods and equipment is currently underway to further increase the capacity and the number of ICU beds up to 180 beds with associated equipment.

The Lebanon Health Resilience Project is financed through a US\$95.8 million contribution from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and a US\$24.2 million grant from the Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF). Launched in 2016, the GCFF provides concessional financing to middle income countries hosting large numbers of refugees at rates usually reserved for the poorest countries.

The World Bank Group, one of the largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries, is taking broad, fast action to help developing countries strengthen their pandemic response. It is supporting public health interventions,

working to ensure the flow of critical supplies and equipment, and helping the private sector continue to operate and sustain jobs. The WBG is making available up to \$160 billion over a 15-month period ending June 2021 to help more than 100 countries protect the poor and vulnerable, support businesses, and bolster economic recovery. This includes \$50 billion of new IDA resources through grants and highly concessional loans and \$12 billion for developing countries to finance the purchase and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

As Lebanon registers new records in the daily surge of COVID-19 infections and after the Lebanese government has declared a health emergency, UN Lebanon and partners call on individuals and all sectors to strictly abide by the lockdown and preventive measures.

Despite continued efforts by many individuals, families, communities, public and private services, businesses and industries that have been applying preventive measures since February 2020, the number of cases has increased to the extent that ICU beds are no longer available in Beirut and 1,705 people have lost their lives, out of 226,948 cumulative cases, as of 12 January 2021[1]. The increase was primarily driven by a significant increase in social gatherings during the holiday season, such as restaurants, crowds at bars, weddings, shopping malls and elsewhere. COVID-19 is a deadly

disease impacting the health of individuals, their livelihoods and the economy. It will only decrease if individuals and all public and private sectors abide by preventive measures strictly and consistently.

"We have reached a tipping point in our year-long fight against COVID-19. The virus is spreading like wildfire and is weighing heavily and severely on Lebanon's multifaceted crises, making people's life unbearable on different fronts," said Najat Rochdi, Deputy Special Coordinator, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon. "Business as usual is no longer an option and fighting this deadly virus doesn't spare anyone. We have all a role to play, a social responsibility to recognize and shoulder. That's why we must all redouble our efforts and take simple but life-saving preventive and safety measures because every single person's support and contribution is crucial to that effort," she added.

UN Lebanon and partners will flood their digital platforms with a new campaign to extend the promotion of the preventive measures and behaviors, as part of the UN response to contain COVID-19 through communication and community engagement strategies. UN support to the COVID-19 national plan also includes immediate coordinated response plans and actions to control the transmission of the virus, such as the provision of technical assistance, health supplies, services and equipment,

Signing of MoU Between ICD and SQB Securities, Uzbekistan



Signing MOU for the development of Islamic finance and capital markets in Uzbekistan:
Ayman Sejiny, Chief Executive Officer of ICD

Ayman Amin Sejiny, the CEO of the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD), the private sector arm of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and Amur Safaraliyevich Djalilov, the CEO of SQB Securities LLC, signed a MoU for the development of Islamic finance and capital markets in Uzbekistan.

The MoU will cover the following areas of cooperation:

- * Conduct selective training courses on Islamic finance and its products and services for local banks and financial institutions in Uzbekistan;
- * Introduce Islamic finance instruments such as Sukuk and other instruments;
- * Attract potential international financial institutions to Uzbekistan market;
- * Attract Shari'ah-compliant debt financing for potential projects in Uzbekistan;

Sejiny stressed the importance of the MoU in increasing capacity-building, promoting knowledge-sharing and supporting greater sustainable access to finance across ICD member countries.

Sejiny commented "Providing assistance to the development of the Islamic finance industry has always been among our top priorities. We look forward to pursuing and intensifying this effort to better tackle Uzbekistan's needs to develop innovative, robust and competitive financial systems at both domestic and regional levels." Sejiny added: "We will further strengthen our cooperation in promoting sustainable growth and attracting financing for the projects in Uzbekistan."

On his part, Djalilov added: "The Islamic finance and Shari'ah-compliant instruments have a huge potential in the market today and we believe that our capital markets will benefit from them which will be alternative opportunity to conventional financial instruments and to attract new investments."

The Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD)

The Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) is a multilateral financial institution established by the Board of Governors of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) during its twenty-fourth (24) annual meeting held in Rajab 1420H (November 1999) in

Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. ICD was established to be the IDBG private sector window. The authorized capital of the Corporation is USD 4 billion. The shareholders consist of the IsDB (rated Triple-A), 55-member countries, and 5 financial institutions from the member countries. ICD is Rated A2' by Moody's, 'A' by S&P and, A+ by Fitch

ICD aims to play a complementary role to the activities of IsDB and the national financing institutions in member countries by focusing on private sector institutions in their various activities and operations in full compliance with the principles of Islamic Shari'ah. In addition to extending financing and financial services, ICD provides advisory and consultancy services to governments and private sector institutions in order to adopt policies for establishing, expanding, and modernizing private sector companies, developing equity capital markets (ECM), debt capital markets (DCM) in the form of Sukuk, adopting better management practices, and strengthening the role of the market economy. ICD focuses its financing on development projects (such as infrastructure and private equity funds) that aim to create job opportunities and to encourage exports.

In order to achieve all these goals, ICD establishes and strengthens cooperation and partnership relationships with an aim to establish joint or collective financing. ICD also applies financial technology (Fintech) to make financing more efficient and comprehensive. Financial services institutions within ICD's member countries are benefiting from fintech innovations by using artificial intelligence, robotics, blockchain, data analytics, and

Ayman Amin Sejiny, CEO of the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD):

“ Stressing the importance of increasing capacity-building, promoting knowledge-sharing and supporting greater sustainable access to finance across ICD member countries ”

cloud computing services. ICD created a platform based on its relationships with 119 financial institutions, through which, the Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDBG) in general and the institution, in particular, can have access to a concerned country and identify available financing opportunities. The platform allows financial entities to collaborate in identifying investment opportunities, sharing market information, and laying the groundwork for actual financial transactions within the OIC member countries and across borders.

SQB Securities LLC
SQB SECURITIES, an investment

banking arm of JSC O'ZBEKISTON SA-NOAT-QURILISH BANKI (UzSQB), has licenses to carry out professional activities in the securities market, issued by the Capital Market Development Agency:

- * Investment intermediary;
 - * Investment advisor;
 - * Trustee;
- SQB Securities provides investment banking and advisory services to enterprises / organizations of Uzbekistan and non-residents:
- * Capital raising both private and public equity;
 - * Advising and supporting restructuring, reorganization and M&A;

- * Structured finance and syndicate loans for investment projects;
- * Brokerage/Trading and depository services;
- * Private and public offering of securities;
- * Organization of bond issues;
- * Organization of project financing;
- * Organization of combined types of financing and etc

SQB Securities has successful experience in providing consulting services, cooperation with international investment banks, funds and financial institutions such as EBRD, ADB and others

NCB Plans Name Change to 'Saudi National Bank' After Conclusion of Intended Merger with Samba

Proposed name reflects the creation of a National Banking Champion for Saudi Arabia through the merger of two of the country's leading banks

National Commercial Bank (NCB) plans to change its name to 'Saudi National Bank' after conclusion of its intended merger with Samba Financial Group (Samba). The merger will create a new Saudi banking champion with more than SAR 837 billion (\$223 billion) in assets, uniquely positioned to accelerate the transformation of Saudi Arabia's banking landscape and deliver progress towards Vision 2030. THE NEXT MILESTONES IN THE MERGER JOURNEY ARE TO RECEIVE REGULATORY APPROVAL FOR THE TRANSACTION AND FOR SHAREHOLDERS TO APPROVE THE TRANSACTION IN THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS (EGM) FOR BOTH BANKS.

Saeed Mohammed Al-Ghamdi, Chairman of NCB, said: "This merger is about value creation for shareholders, customers and employees of both banks. The name Saudi National Bank articulates our vision to create a bank that has the capital base and the liquidity to pursue growth and support social and economic transformation in Saudi Arabia."

Ammar Abdulwahid Alkhudairy, Chairman of Samba, commented: "The proposed name Saudi National Bank

embodies the goal of the merged entity of becoming the new banking champion for Saudi Arabia. Our aspiration is that this merger will create a trusted partner for companies and institutions; a backbone for the mega-projects that are transforming our nation; and a destination for the best industry talent."

The new larger bank will support the Kingdom's increasing trade and capital flows in and out of global and regional markets and foster development of small and medium-sized enterprises through innovative digital propositions. It will grow its retail banking, private banking and coverage of clients to increase home ownership, savings and investment.

Both banks will continue to operate independently until shareholders have voted on the merger and all legal requirements and regulatory approvals are met. The deal is expected to conclude in the first half of 2021. New shares in NCB will be issued to Samba shareholders by way of a capital increase. The merged bank's headquarters will be in Riyadh. *Subject to regulatory and shareholder approval.



Doha Bank Announces the Launch of Doha Bank Easy Pay Wallet



Launching Doha Bank latest innovation, Doha Easy Pay Wallet: Dr. R. Seetharaman, Group Chief Executive Officer of Doha Bank

Doha Bank, one of the largest private commercial banks in Qatar, has announced the launch of Doha Bank Easy Pay Wallet. Customers can enjoy quick, safe, and seamless payments by adding their Doha Bank Credit or Debit Cards to their Doha Easy Pay bringing a new dimension to their wallet.

Customers can download Doha Easy Pay App from the Apple Store or the Google Play Store which enables them to perform quick, safe, and seamless payments for their retail purchases by simply scanning the QR Code. In addition, Doha Easy Pay also enables the users to make fund transfers to beneficiaries instantly by linking their Doha Bank Debit Card to Doha Easy Pay wallet.

Dr. R. Seetharaman, Group CEO of Doha Bank, said: "We are excited to announce the launch of our latest innovation, Doha Easy Pay Wallet. Our commitment is to provide our clients with the latest technological advancements. We have an unrelenting commitment to

always provide our customers with easy, safe and secure banking." Braik Al-Marri, Chief Retail Banking Officer, commented; "We are proud to surpass expectations by providing unrivalled banking methods to our dear clients. We will continue to seek new ways satisfy our customer's needs."

Doha Bank customers can now download Doha Bank Easy Pay Wallet from the Apple Store and Google Play Store.

Doha Bank operations are geographically spread across strategic locations in Qatar. The bank also operates 6 full-fledged branches in UAE, Kuwait and India, and has representative offices across the globe encompassing a robust and strategic network of correspondent banking relationships.

The strategic vision of the Board of Directors of Doha Bank is to position the bank at par with leading banks at the local and regional levels, and to have a global foothold by opening branches or representative offices in the countries that have bilateral trade relationships with Qatar and GCC countries. It also includes diversifying the source of income and sus-

taining the performance of the bank under the current volatile economic conditions. Due to the effective and inspiring leadership and the strategic visions adopted by Doha Bank, the bank has been consistently registering strong growth rates during the last decade and maintaining the highest performance level in terms of growth in total assets, loans, deposits and shareholder's equity.

Doha Bank has received numerous awards in recognition of its achievements. Doha Bank was adjudged as the 'Best Regional Commercial Bank' – The Banker Middle East for the 4th straight year. Doha Bank was recently awarded as 'Bank of the Year – Qatar Domestic Trade Finance' by Asian Banking & Finance. Additionally, Doha Bank has in the past claimed various other awards such as, 'Bank of the Year' – The Banker, 'Best Commercial Bank in the Middle East' – Global Banking & Finance, 'Bank of the Year' – ITP Group, 'Best Bank in Qatar' – IAIR Award and 'Best Bank in Qatar' – EMEA Finance.

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Judges from France interrogate Lebanese-French businessman Ziad Takieddine

Lebanese-French businessman Ziad Takieddine was interrogated by three judges who came from France to hear him over his involvement in the funding of Nicolas Sarkozy's electoral campaign in cash from late Libyan president Moamer Kadhafi.

The hearing session took place at the Cassation Courtroom in the Justice Palace of Beirut, in presence of Prosecutor Imad Qabalan and Takieddine's lawyer.

Kingdom of Morocco Expresses Satisfaction with positive development of relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Abroad said in a statement that, given the strong ties and sincere affection uniting His Majesty King Mohammed VI and his brothers, the leaders of the countries of the Arab Gulf, Morocco expresses the hope that these developments constitute the beginning for the reunification and the establishment of mutual trust as well as for overcoming this crisis in order to consolidate the unity within the Gulf family.

The Kingdom of Morocco commends the efforts undertaken by the brotherly State of Kuwait as well as the constructive role of the United States in this regard, the statement added. --- MAP NEWS

GCC summit in AIUla: GCC leaders vow joint action against challenges

The leaders of the GCC countries signed the final communique of the 41st GCC Summit which calls for unity and joint action to combat threats against GCC's security.

In a press conference, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan said the agreement reached between the GCC leaders calls for joint cooperation to combat any threats to Gulf security and not to compromise the GCC's sovereignty.

The "AIUla Declaration" reaffirms the need to enhance the role of the Gulf Cooperation Council by coordinating political stances between its countries.

The declaration highlights the importance of strengthening military integration between the GCC states to encounter challenges facing the region.

"The declaration calls for protecting the national unity of signatory countries and combat any threats to the Gulf security," Bin Farhan said.

He said the agreement has turned a new chapter in the GCC march and put an end to all differences with Qatar. "Today's agreement put an end to differences with Qatar. The AIUla Declaration is an achievement that will reflect on the region's stability," the Foreign Minister said.

"The political will of the GCC leaders is the major guarantee to implement the AIUla agreement," Bin Farhan said.

He emphasized that the GCC countries will work as a unified entity to deal with challenges facing the region, particularly the Iranian threat.-- Gulf News

Iraq evacuates oil tanker after mine found attached to hull

An Iraqi oil tanker was evacuated after a mine was discovered attached to its hull, the military said, adding that a government explosives team was still working to make the vessel safe.

The tanker was located in international waters about 28 nautical miles (52 km) off shore and supplying another ship with fuel when the device was discovered, they said in a statement.

It was not immediately clear how the mine became attached to the tanker, which was being rented by an unidentified client

from State Oil Marketer SOMO, the military said. --- Reuters
1 dead, 24 migrants rescued on Greek island of Lesbos
 The Greek coast guard says it has rescued 24 people and recovered the body of one man from the southern part of the Aegean island of Lesbos, while a search and rescue operation has been launched for potentially missing people.

The 25, believed to be migrants who had arrived from nearby Turkey, were located on an inaccessible part of the island's coast lately and were transported from the area by a coast guard vessel, the coast guard said. A helicopter and several coast guard vessels were searching the area following reports from the migrants that there could be a further three people missing.

The coast guard said it was not immediately clear how the group arrived or what had happened to their boat.—AP

Amnesty Int'l reprimands France over weapons used against peaceful protesters in Lebanon

Amnesty International lately urged Paris to halt weapons sales to Lebanon, saying French-manufactured rubber bullets, tear gas grenades and launchers had been used to quell peaceful demonstrations.

"France has for years been supplying Lebanese security forces with law enforcement equipment that they then used to commit or facilitate serious human rights violations," the group said in a statement.

"We call on France to ensure that there are no further sales until the Lebanese authorities have acknowledged past violations," said Aymeric Elluin, advocacy officer on arms transfers at Amnesty International France.

"Lebanese security forces are operating in a climate of impunity." French-manufactured rubber bullets, tear gas grenades and launchers have been used repeatedly since the start of an unprecedented anti-government protest movement in October 2019, according to the rights group.

They were also used in 2015 to disperse protests over a waste management crisis that saw trash pile up across the capital, it added.

Amnesty said its findings were based on analysis of more than 100 videos of protests in Beirut, as well testimonies and medical records collected by researchers on the ground.

It accused security forces of firing tear gas canisters directly at protesters, as well as shooting rubber bullets at chest-level, sometimes from close range, between October 2019 and August 2020.

Security forces also used French-made armoured vehicles, it added. Amnesty called the role of French law enforcement equipment in the crackdown on demonstrations "shameful".

"There has been no effective investigation of the unlawful use of weapons, including those made in France, against peaceful protesters, and not a single security officer has been held to account by judicial authorities," Elluin said.-(AFP)

Magnitude-6.4 Quake Hits Argentina: USGS

A 6.4-magnitude earthquake shook western and central Argentina, the United States Geological Survey said, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or significant damage.

The quake struck at 11:45 pm local time (02:45 GMT Tuesday) at a depth of 20 kilometers, according to the USGS.

The epicenter was near the town of Pocito, in San Juan province, about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from Buenos Aires and near the border with Chile, it added. Some towns in San Juan were temporarily without power due to the tremor.

The quake was also felt in the provinces of Mendoza, Cordoba, Santa Fe, La Rioja and Buenos Aires. ----AFP

Out-of-control truck kills 15 on Indian roadside

An out-of-control dumper truck crushed fifteen people to death as they slept by the roadside in western India, authorities said.

The dead included a baby girl, eight women and six men, said police official Usha Rada in the Suraj district of Gujarat state. Six others were injured.

The truck collided with a tractor carrying sugarcane just after midnight at a crossroads.

"The dumper driver... lost control of the vehicle and went off the road, crushing labourers sleeping on the roadside," deputy police superintendent C M Jadeja said.

Police said that the drivers of both the dumper truck and the tractor have been arrested.

High-speed vehicles jostling with motorbikes, pedestrians and cyclists combine with poor infrastructure and poorly maintained vehicles to make India's roads treacherous. In 2019 more than 150,000 people died -- 410 every day or 17 an hour in almost half a million accidents, according to the government. ---AFP

Clashes erupt in Sudan's south Darfur, killing 20

Tribal clashes broke out lately in Sudan's South Darfur state, killing at least 20 people, a tribal leader said, shortly after violence in a neighbouring state killed over 80 people.

"A force from the Arab Rizeigat tribe killed 20 people in an attack on the village of Saadoun inhabited by the Fallata tribe using vehicles, motorcycles and camels," said tribal leader Mohamed Saleh.

"The attack left several houses burned," said Saleh, from the ethnically non-Arab Fallata tribe, adding that bodies were still being counted. Recent violence came after the killing of at least 83 people in clashes between Arab and non-Arab tribes over two days in Sudan's West Darfur state.--AFP

Largest vaccination drive in the world starting in India with 2 "Made in India" vaccines

Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will launch the pan India rollout of COVID-19 vaccination drive on 16th January, 2021 at 10:30 AM via video conferencing. This will be the world's largest vaccination program covering the entire length and breadth of the country. A total of 3006 session sites across all States and UTs will be virtually connected during the launch. Around 100 beneficiaries will be vaccinated at each session site on the inaugural day. This vaccination programme is based on the principles of priority groups to be vaccinated and Health Care workers, both in government and private sectors including ICDS workers, will receive the vaccine during this phase.

The vaccination programme will use Co-WIN, an online digital platform developed by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which will facilitate real time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualized tracking of beneficiaries for COVID-19 vaccine. This digital platform will assist programme managers across all levels while conducting vaccination sessions. Adequate doses of both COVISHIELD and COVAXIN have already been delivered across the country to all States/UTs with the active support of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. These have been further delivered by the State/UT governments to the districts. All preparations are in place to initiate the programme on the principles of Jan Bhagidari.—Indian Embassy in Lebanon

At least 34 killed as quake rocks Indonesia

A powerful earthquake rocked Indonesia's Sulawesi island early Friday (Jan 15), killing at least 34 people, levelling a hospital and severely damaging other buildings, authorities said.

Hundreds more were injured when the 6.2-magnitude quake struck in the early hours, triggering panic among the terrified residents of the island, which was hit by a huge quake and tsu-

nami two and a half years ago that killed thousands.

"The latest information we have is that 26 people are dead... in Mamuju city," said Ali Rahman, head of the local disaster mitigation agency, adding "that number could grow".

Berlusconi hospitalised with heart problem: Doctor

Former Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi has been admitted to hospital in Monaco after suffering heart problems, a spokesman and his doctor said. The 84-year-old media tycoon "is at the Cardiothoracic Hospital in Monaco for tests. He will return home within a few days", his spokesman told AFP. YouTube removes new content uploaded to Trump's channel ---Reuters

Malaysian king declares state of emergency to fight virus

Malaysia's king declared a nationwide state of emergency to fight a coronavirus surge that is overwhelming hospitals, with critics charging it was a move by an unstable government to cling to power.

The announcement came a day after the prime minister introduced sweeping new curbs across much of the Southeast Asian nation, including the closure of most businesses, and warned the health system was "at breaking point".

Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah agreed to declare an emergency until August 1 following a request from Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin in a Monday meeting, the national palace said in a statement. The move allows for the suspension of parliament and political activities, such as local elections, and comes at a time Muhyiddin's highly unstable, 10-month-old government is facing a host of challenges.

Key allies in his ruling coalition are threatening to withdraw support, which could lead to the collapse of the government and snap national polls that some fear could worsen the outbreak.

Malaysia kept the virus in check for much of last year with a tough lockdown but, once curbs were eased, cases accelerated and have repeatedly hit fresh records in recent days.

The emergency could be lifted earlier if the rate of infection slows, the palace statement added.

A election in the state of Sabah last year has been blamed for triggering a new wave of infections that spread nationwide.

But critics expressed worries that the declaration -- rarely used in Malaysia -- was a gambit to cling to power by Muhyiddin that could erode civil liberties.

Marina Mahathir, an activist and the daughter of former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad, tweeted that an emergency declaration was a "declaration of failure".

Muhyiddin first tried persuade the king to declare an emergency in October but was rebuffed.---AFP

Closure of January 2021 Issuance under Saudi Arabian Government SAR-denominated Sukuk Program

The National Debt Management Center has announced that it has closed the January 2021 issuance under the Saudi Arabian Government SAR-denominated Sukuk Program. The issuance size was set at SAR 2,955 billion (two billion and nine hundred fifty-five million SAR).

The Center said that the Sukuk issuances were divided into two tranches as follows: The first tranche has a size of SAR 2,075 billion (two billion and seventy-five million SAR) and a total tranche size of SAR 2,075 billion (two billion and seventy-five million SAR), matures in 2028.

The second tranche has a size of SAR 880 million (eight hundred eighty million SAR), and a total tranche size of SAR 880 million (eight hundred eighty million SAR), matures in 2033.--SPA

France says Iran is building nuclear weapons capacity, urgent to revive 2015 deal

Iran is in the process of building up its nuclear weapons capacity and it is urgent that Tehran and Washington return to a 2015 nuclear agreement, France's foreign minister was quoted as saying in an interview published.

Iran has been accelerating its breaches of the nuclear deal and earlier this month started pressing ahead with plans to enrich uranium to 20% fissile strength at its underground Fordow nuclear plant. That is the level Tehran achieved before striking the deal with world powers to contain its disputed nuclear ambitions. The Islamic Republic's breaches of the nuclear agreement since President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from it in 2018 and subsequently imposed sanctions on Tehran may complicate efforts by President-elect Joe Biden, who takes office on Jan. 20, to rejoin the pact.

"The Trump administration chose what it called the maximum pressure campaign on Iran. The result was that this strategy only increased the risk and the threat," Le Drian told the Journal du Dimanche newspaper.

"This has to stop because Iran and - I say this clearly - is in the process of acquiring nuclear (weapons) capacity."

The agreement's main aim was to extend the time Iran would need to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear bomb, if it so chose, to at least a year from roughly two to three months. It also lifted international sanctions against Tehran.

Western diplomats have said Iran's repeated breaches have already reduced the "breakout time" to well below a year.

Iran denies any intent to weaponise its nuclear programme.

With presidential elections in Iran due in June, Le Drian said it was urgent to "tell the Iranians that this is enough" and to bring Iran and the United States back into the accord.

Biden has said he will return the United States to the deal if Iran resumes strict compliance with it. Iran says sanctions must be lifted before it reverses its nuclear breaches.

However, Le Drian said that even if both sides were to return to the deal, it would not be enough.

"Tough discussions will be needed over ballistic proliferation and Iran's destabilisation of its neighbours in the region," Le Drian said. -- Reuters

Trump awards Bahrain ruler US Legion of Merit

Bahrain's King Hamad became the latest leader in the Middle East to be honoured by US President Donald Trump when he was bestowed the American Legion of Merit, Degree of Chief Commander.

The award is granted by US presidents to foreign leaders in recognition of close ties and outstanding achievements.

Trump bestowed the award on King Hamad "in recognition of his remarkable efforts to strengthen the Bahrain-US friendship relations and solid partnership", state-run Bahrain News Agency reported lately.

The award comes days after the US named Bahrain and UAE as major security partners in recognition of the countries' long-standing military co-operation. Trump expressed pleasure at presenting the Legion of Merit to King Hamad.

Trump said that "under King Hamad's decades of steady leadership as Crown Prince, Emir and King, Bahrain has proved to be an indefatigable ally of the US", the agency reported.

He also noted Bahrain's assistance in hosting the US Fifth Fleet, giving the US a maritime foothold in the Gulf region.—thenationalnews

A female doctor has developed Saudi Arabia's first COVID-19 vaccine

As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to make strides in the fight against COVID-19, a major breakthrough has happened by a Saudi doctor.

Dr. Iman Al Mansour from Iman Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University and Ph.D. holder in Biomedical Engineering and Biotechnology-University of Massachusetts has just developed Saudi Arabia's very first COVID-19 vaccine while being an assistant professor at the university. Per the university, the preclinical studies of the developed vaccine have been completed and the research has been published. Once the necessary approvals have been given clinical trials will commence.

As per research findings published in the scientific Pharmaceutical Journal, the vaccine now enters the trial phase and has now adopted a DNA technology which no longer requires freezing, thanks to Dr. Iman Al-Mansour on this Saudi milestone.

While about 60,000 people have already been inoculated with the vaccination in the Kingdom, more than two million people have registered for the vaccine in the first month after the registration process was launched.

Congratulation to Dr. Iman Al Mansour for achieving this phenomenal milestone in Saudi's history.

UN Secretary-General appoints Jan Kubis of Slovakia as his Special Envoy on Libya

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced lately the appointment of Ján Kubiš of Slovakia as his Special Envoy on Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). This position is established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2542 (2020).

The Secretary-General is grateful for the commitment and outstanding leadership of Acting Special Representative Stephanie T. Williams of the United States in moving the political process forward in Libya.

Kubiš, who has served as Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) since 2019, brings with him many years of experience in diplomacy, foreign security policy, and international economic relations, both internationally and in his own country.

He previously served as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), from 2015 to 2018, and as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) from 2011 to 2015. He was the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) from 2009 to 2011, Minister for Foreign Affairs in Slovakia from 2006 to 2009, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from 2007 to 2008, and Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) from 1999 to 2005.

Kubiš also served as the European Union's Special Representative for Central Asia with the office in Brussels and as the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE for Central Asia, as the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Tajikistan and Head of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan from 1998 to 1999. He was previously the Director of OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre and worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the former Czechoslovakia from 1976 to 1992 and thereafter at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia. In 1993 he served as Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva.—UNIC

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to be honoured by US President Donald Trump when he was bestowed the American Legion of Merit, Degree of Chief Commander.

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Trump said that "under King Hamad's decades of steady leadership as Crown Prince, Emir and King, Bahrain has proved to be an indefatigable ally of the US", the agency reported.

He also noted Bahrain's assistance in hosting the US Fifth Fleet, giving the US a maritime foothold in the Gulf region.—The National News

Qatar's foreign minister wants Gulf Arab nations to talk with Iran: Bloomberg

Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani told Bloomberg that Qatar has urged Gulf Arab nations to enter a dialogue with Iran and that it was the right time for Doha to broker negotiations.

"This is also a desire that's shared by other GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries," he told Bloomberg TV bloom. bg/369WLz9 in an interview.

The Qatari foreign minister added that his government was supporting ongoing discussions between Iran and South Korea to secure the release of an oil tanker seized by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard early this month.

Commenting separately on potential U.S.-Iran talks, he said that Qatar will facilitate the discussions if asked and will support whoever is chosen to do so. "We want the accomplishment, we want to see the deal happening", he said of potential talks between Washington and Tehran. --Reuters

Iran fires longrange missiles into Indian Ocean in military drill media

Iran's Revolutionary Guards fired long-range ballistic missiles into the Indian Ocean on the second day of a military exercise, state media reported.

The drill, which comes in the waning days of high tensions with U.S. President Donald Trump's administration, was conducted in the country's central desert region.

It followed Friday's testing of surface-to-surface ballistic missiles and locally manufactured new drones in the same area.

"One of our most important defense policy goals is to use long-range ballistic missiles against enemy warships, including aircraft carriers and warships," state media quoted Guards commander Major General Hossein Salami as saying.

With these missiles, which have a range of 1,800 kilometres, he said, "we can now strike moving targets in the ocean," instead of the usual low-speed cruise missiles.

Saturday's drill targets were in the Gulf of Oman and the northern Indian Ocean.

Chief of Staff General Mohammad Baqeri said while Iran had "no offensive intentions", it would now be able to "respond to any hostile and malicious act in the shortest time".

Lately, Iran tested short-range naval missile in the Gulf and there were exercises earlier this month that featured a wide array of domestically produced drones.

Iran has one of the biggest missile programmes in the Middle East, regarding them as a deterrent and retaliatory force against

the United States and other adversaries in the event of war.

There have been periodic confrontations between Iran's military and U.S. forces in the Gulf since 2018, when Trump abandoned Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and reinstated harsh sanctions against Tehran.

President-elect Joe Biden has said the United States will rejoin the nuclear deal "if Iran resumes strict compliance". -- Reuters

Erdogan says wants EU ties 'Back On Track'

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he wanted to improve relations with the European Union and was hoping for the same "goodwill" from the 27-nation bloc.

Erdogan's comments follow a year of tensions involving Turkey's more assertive foreign policy in the eastern Mediterranean as well as Libya and parts of the Middle East.

Turkey's relations have become especially strained with Greece and European power France as a result.

But the Turkish leader has softened some of his toughest rhetoric and took a conciliatory tone in a televised meeting with EU ambassadors in a presidential compound in Ankara. "We expect our European friends to show the same goodwill."--AFP

Lebanon begins new lockdown amid surge in coronavirus cases

Lebanon began a 25-day nationwide lockdown to limit the spread of the coronavirus as infections hit a record high in the tiny Mediterranean nation and patients overwhelmed the health care sector, said AP.

The lockdown in Lebanon is the third since the first case was reported in late February. It will close most businesses and limit traffic by imposing an odd-and-even license plate rule on alternating days. It also reduces the number of flights at the country's only international airport.

A daily 6 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew will be in effect as of Thursday until Feb. 1. Also on Thursday, Lebanon broke its single-day record of new coronavirus cases for the third straight day, with 4,774 reported infections over the past 24 hours.

It came after a holiday season in which tens of thousands of visitors flew into the country to celebrate Christmas and New Year's. Lebanon also reported 16 new coronavirus deaths on Thursday, bringing the number of total cases in the small Mediterranean country to over 200,000, with more than 1,500 deaths.

In Beirut's commercial Hamra district, many shops were closed as of morning hours. Police patrols drove by to make sure the lockdown was implemented and motorists who violated the lockdown orders were fined.

First responders in the country hit by a severe economic crisis say they have been transporting nearly 100 patients a day to hospitals, which are now reporting near-full occupancy, including in intensive care units.

Lebanon saw new infections start to increase during the summer, following a massive explosion in Beirut's port in August that shook the city and its health sector, killing over 200 people and injuring 6,000. August's numbers increased by over 300% from July as a result and have since been climbing.

Arab Parliament to launch professional diploma in Arab parliamentary diplomacy

Arab Parliament Speaker Adel Al Assoomi has announced the launch of the first certified professional diploma in parliamentary diplomacy.

The course is organized by the Arab Parliamentary Diplomacy Center of the Arab Parliament in partnership with prestigious Arab universities and academies in the Arab world.

Brazil Electricity Pricing Reform Creates New Opportunities for GCC Investors

January 2021 marks a historic change for Brazil's energy sector, hourly electricity spot pricing will create new opportunities for renewable energy investment



Why does it matter to the GCC investment community? *Electricity Price Formation*

A new study by Mangifera Analytics explores the details of this change and demonstrates, through solar and wind case studies, why it matters to GCC investors. On January 1st, 2021, Brazil took huge step in its evolution towards a cleaner, greener, and more investor-friendly energy market, when the long-anticipated shift to hourly spot pricing comes into effect. For a market that has been trading electricity on a weekly basis, the shift to hourly pricing will now track much shorter-term fluctuations in supply and demand, creating new opportunities and substantial benefits across the board.

As an Introduction to hourly PLD & its Impacts on renewable energy, this in-depth report reveals the new market mechanics and clarifies the underlying calculation model, while providing specific case studies for wind and solar power projects. The shift to hourly PLD will create an entirely new investment landscape, with new products, services, platforms designed to serve the new spot market, making this report an invaluable resource for anyone considering or developing projects in this new era for Brazilian energy. The Brazilian energy sector

took a huge step in its evolution towards a greener, more efficient, and increasingly investor-friendly energy market with its shift from weekly to hourly electricity pricing. The move comes amid ongoing reform that is driving an exciting new era of growth for this sleeping giant of the global energy landscape. A new Mangifera Analytics study explores the details of this foundational pricing change and demonstrates why it matters to the GCC investment community.

“Blessed with year-round sunshine and reliable wind, there has never been any doubt about the potential of renewable energy in Brazil. However, developing an effective renewable energy sector is not just about geography, the real challenge is creating a business environment that drives investment into the sector,” says Rachel Andalaft, CEO of Mangifera Analytics. “The January shift to hourly spot pricing is a pinnacle of the ongoing reform across the Brazilian energy sector and as our recent study shows, it will create significant new opportunities for savvy energy investors in the GCC and around the world.”

According to Bloomberg's 2019 Climate-scope report, Brazil now ranks third most

attractive in the world for clean energy investments. Brazil also ranks third globally in terms of installed capacity from renewable energy sources, after only China and the US, according to IRENA analysis. Despite this, Brazil only ranks 7th in the world for installed wind power capacity and 22nd for solar, revealing the underlying complexity holding back the hydroelectric-dominated market. Experts now see the shift to hourly spot pricing as the trigger for a solar and wind revolution in the populous and power-hungry South American nation.

In Brazil's solar power sector, supported

Rachel Andalaft, CEO of Mangifera Analytics:

“

The January shift to hourly spot pricing is a pinnacle of the ongoing reform across the Brazilian energy sector, creating significant new opportunities for savvy international energy investors”

”

by dependable equatorial sunlight for daytime generation, the shift to hourly pricing will provide clear benefits from recurring intraday peaks. While for Brazil's more mature wind power sector, the reliable wind profile could be exposed to higher intraday variations. However, as the new study shows, both wind and solar projects trading on an unregulated market that is actively prioritizing these sources will have chances to seize significantly higher returns and carry the burden to manage that exposure.

The new report explains how the introduction of hourly spot pricing will benefit investors, generators, and the grid itself. Power purchase agreements as well as traders operating in the unregulated market will now benefit from price spreads at an hourly scale and will have the flexibility to strategize different sources of energy. Specially solar and wind power present a profitable case for generators seizing new opportunities in the spot market. The shift also incentivizes energy storage, which enables unprecedented flexibility for consumers and the grid, providing balance for a Brazilian grid that is striving to prioritize solar and wind generation in the decades ahead.

The shift to hourly electricity pricing also creates an entirely new investment landscape, with new products, services, platforms designed to serve the new spot market. This is especially significant to GCC investors that may have previously shunned the Brazilian market due to cultural distance and the complexities of its antiquated electricity price formation methodology. Brazil will still be a complex market but the shift to modern hourly spot pricing is expected to trigger an era of rapid growth that will be impossible for investors in the GCC to ignore.

“Brazil has always had a complex energy market but ongoing reform is increasingly converting that potential into tangible business cases, at least for those who know how to navigate Brazil's dense legal and regulatory jungle,” says Rachel Andalaft, CEO of Mangifera Analytics. “That's the mission behind Mangifera Analytics. To make Brazil's expert insider-knowledge available to the GCC investment community, to create the bridges and channels that will drive the investments and returns required to drive Brazil's renewable energy evolution.”

To support GCC analysts and investors, Mangifera Analytics has also created a free

hourly spot price monitoring tool to provide insight for all those exploring the change and what it means for their interests in Brazil. The tool is available at mangifera-analytics.com alongside an in-depth new report on the new pricing system, as well as other comprehensive reports and datasets that demystifying the complexities of the Brazilian market while providing the hard knowledge that investors need to succeed in this bright new era for renewable energy in Brazil.

Born in Brazil — offices in Europe, Asia, and North America — Mangifera Analytics offers actionable market intelligence on the Brazilian energy sector. Through in-depth reports and comprehensive datasets, our network of local experts provides unrivaled insider knowledge and up-to-date information to provide investors the insight they need to succeed in this promising new era for renewable energy in Brazil.

In addition, Mangifera Analytics provides a range of tailored services, from financial modeling to bespoke reports and customized datasets, as well as one-to-one consulting. Mangifera is a one-stop-shop for all investor data, analysis, and project development needs.

Healthcare and Life Sciences Deal Activity Will Be Robust in 2021

Volume of deals rises 15% aided by late 2020 surge, despite pandemic -- Growing valuations seen in biopharma, healthcare IT, diagnostics subsectors, executives say in survey

The healthcare and life sciences deal markets were active in 2020 and promise to continue to be robust into 2021, even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the KPMG 2021 Healthcare and Life Sciences Investment Outlook survey.

Investors are making bold moves in some subsectors, based on confidence about the future, reflected in already high valuations that will continue into 2021, as echoed by nearly half of survey respondents.

"While the dollar value of deals across healthcare and life sciences was lower in 2020 than in 2019, the M&A market was extremely active during the second half of the year and early indicators point to a very active 2021," said Brett Glover, KPMG U.S. healthcare & life sciences deal advisory leader. "And the trend we saw in life sciences in 2020 toward smaller tuck-in deals, strategic partnerships, and joint ventures is likely to continue in 2021, many using creative payment models."

KPMG's 2021 Healthcare and Life Sciences Investment Outlook provides insights to investors based upon a comprehensive analysis of ten industry subsectors and the policy and regulatory environments in which they operate. The outlook includes an analysis of 2020 deal activity, followed by an overview of each subsector for 2021 viewed through the lens of recent and future economic, business, and policy developments.

"The 2021 KPMG Investment Outlook leverages insights gleaned from a survey of nearly 300 industry leaders who provide their perspectives on how the COVID-19 pandemic, evolving market factors, and the political and policy environment may impact investment decisions in 2021," says

Larry Kocot, national leader of the KPMG Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight. "Our outlook contextualizes a number of variables impacting investment and provides a sector-by-sector analysis to help investors assess the opportunities and challenges of investing in the year ahead."

2020: Variations across Sectors
The global pandemic impacted healthcare and life sciences very differently in 2020. In healthcare, elective surgeries, regular wellness visits, and chronic illness checkups were put on hold, putting the sector on a rollercoaster in terms of patient volume. Healthcare deals slowed in the second quarter but accelerated through the end of the year. In life sciences, there were steady transactions throughout the year despite high valuations, driven in part by optimism fueled by government investment in COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, as well as ongoing activity and interest in breakthrough drugs.

Many healthcare organizations, as well as diagnostics and medical device makers, ranked COVID-19 as one of the top two factors affecting deal activity in both 2020 and 2021. In contrast, biopharma and pharmaceutical services company executives ranked valuation and competition for a limited number of high-value or innovative targets as larger factors influencing deal activity in both years.

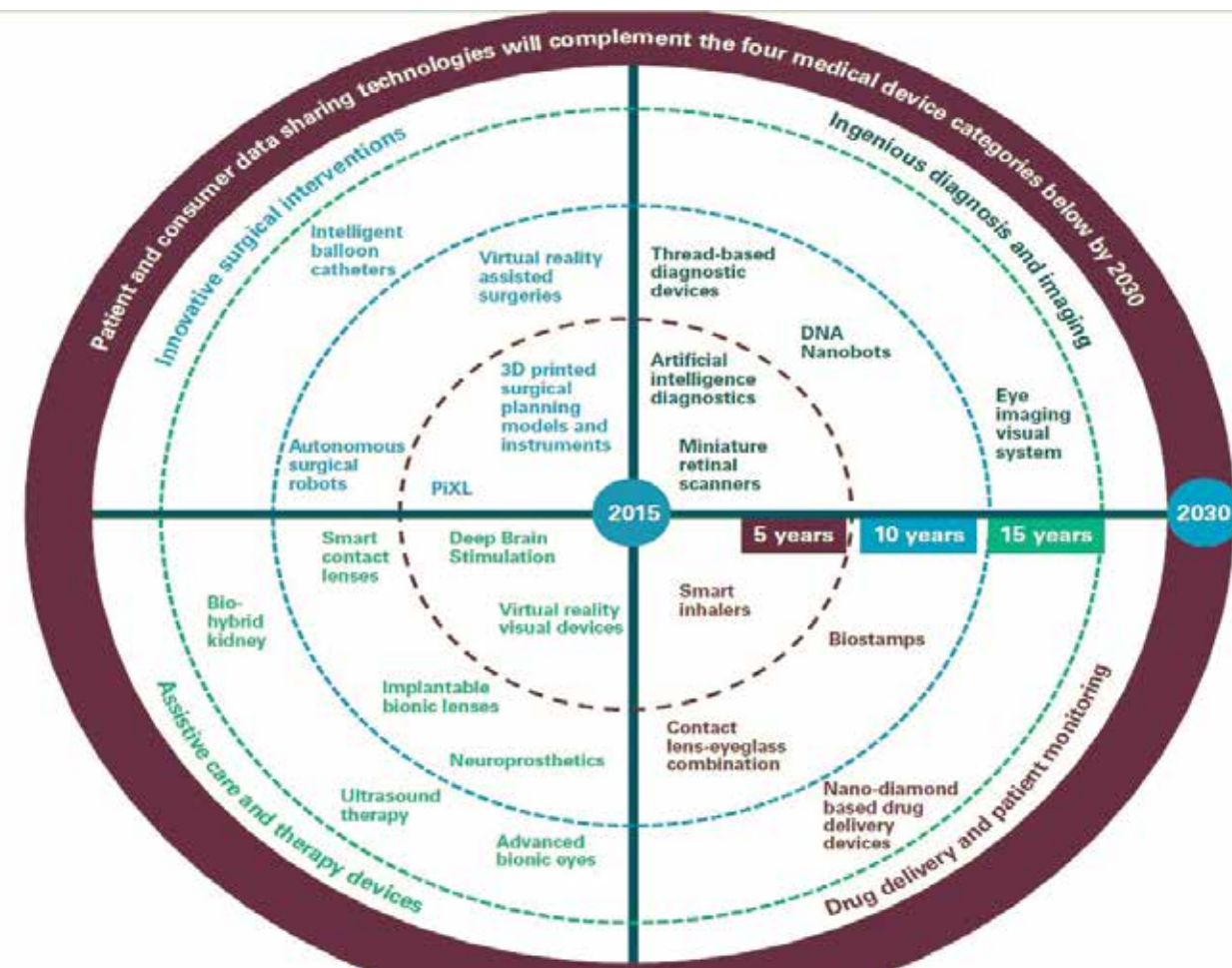
Although the pandemic challenged companies in all subsectors, those that fared best launched opportunistic and/or defensive investment strategies, e.g., acquiring products and services to meet COVID-19-related needs. For example, diagnostics manufacturers and labs pivoted to COVID-19 testing, although only some organizations were

able to maintain non-COVID-related testing at the same time. And as regulatory requirements were waived to allow broader use of telehealth during the pandemic, technologies to enable virtual visits were adopted by providers at an accelerated pace. This trend not only benefitted tech companies, but also allowed hospitals and physician practices to continue seeing patients while complying with social distancing mandates.

"COVID-19 created a new challenge for healthcare and life sciences companies to innovate both in bringing products to market to combat the pandemic and offering new products and services that support evolving modes of care delivery," says Kristin Pothier, KPMG global healthcare and life sciences deal advisory and strategy leader. "In some ways, the pandemic served as a catalyst for long-awaited changes in certain subsectors."

2021: Resilience and Transformation
In both healthcare and life sciences, the companies in the reviewed subsectors can be indexed in terms of their (1) resilience, i.e., the ability to withstand and embrace significant change, not just through COVID, but in general, and, (2) transformation, i.e., commitment to continuous innovation in order to evolve and align with the changing needs of patients and the public. These factors have influenced expectations of rising valuations for biopharma, healthcare IT, and diagnostics companies.

"Resilience and transformation are inextricably intertwined," Kocot said. "An investor's outlook could depend on where a company falls within the intersection of these two concepts. While some of what we saw this year was surprising, certain subsectors that have historically shown resilience and agility continued to do so."



Medical Devices Technology Roadmap to 2030: Patient and consumer data sharing technologies will complement the four medical device categories below by 2030-Source: KPMG

For example, the boost that the biopharmaceutical subsector received from billions of dollars of pre-orders for COVID-19 vaccines and treatments allowed companies to continue to make bets on high-priced breakthrough drugs for rare diseases, such as cell and gene therapies and antibody-drug conjugates. And although medical device manufacturers that lean heavily toward devices used in elective surgeries were hard hit this year, many others are making large numbers of tuck-in deals based on future market need for either diversification or concentration in one therapeutic area.

"With the exception of a few, very specific subsectors, most companies have rebounded and deal making has resumed globally with a focus on cell and gene therapies, healthcare IT, lab services, and precision medicine-based therapeutics and diagnostics that use cutting-edge science to improve the public's health and well-being," Pothier said.

Select subsector highlights
Biopharma experienced the most active deal market in history with 384 deals, with 82% of surveyed pharmaceutical executives

reporting that they saw valuations increase in 2020. The focus on early-stage cell and gene therapies and antibody-drug conjugates is expected to continue in 2021, with an increasing use of creative deal structures.

Diagnostics manufacturer deal volume is expected to increase in 2021, with 63% of survey respondents saying that moving into COVID-19 testing has allowed their companies to make more deals.

Telehealth companies received the majority of the record-breaking \$6.5 billion in funding provided to the digital health sector during the first six months of the pandemic, and the subsector ranks among survey respondents as the most attractive healthcare IT subsector for investment in the next 12-24 months.

Behavioral health roll-ups are expected to increase in 2021 to meet the needs of an increasing volume of patients suffering from depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders during the pandemic.

"The level of activity in the healthcare and life sciences deal market -- even in the face of a pandemic -- speaks to the solid fundamentals of companies in many of

these subsectors," Glover said. "Looking to 2021, we expect organizations in certain subsectors to successfully complete acquisitions that were put on hold in 2020, while others will deploy capital by pursuing platform expansion and bolt-on acquisitions or investing internally to improve operational efficiencies."

KPMG LLP is the U.S. firm of the KPMG global organization of independent professional services firms providing audit, tax and advisory services. The KPMG global organization operates in 146 countries and territories and has close to 227,000 people working in member firms around the world. Each KPMG firm is a legally distinct and separate entity and describes itself as such. KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee. KPMG International Limited and its related entities do not provide services to clients.

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GlobeMed Egypt Announces New Cancer Bulletin

GlobeMed Egypt Releases the Cancer Bulletin Depicting New Cancer Cases among its Population of insured members



Cancer incidence rates are increasing with an overall average annual increase of 6.5%: Mounir Kharma, GlobeMed Chairman

GlobeMed recognizes the importance of spreading awareness about prevention & early detection to halt the spread of cancer. As part of these efforts, GlobeMed has finalized an exhaustive research about cancer in Egypt based on its experience and the information available to GlobeMed Egypt at the date of this study. The study, with data covering 6 years from 2014 to 2019 on GlobeMed Egypt's

portfolio, revealed notable findings:

- Cancer incidence rates are increasing with an overall average annual increase of 6.5%, averaging around 362 new cancer cases per 100,000 persons.
- Around 20% of all new cancer cases occur in the blood and lymphatic system, followed by the digestive system and breast at about 17% each. Those three locations account for more than 54% of all cancer cases under

GlobeMed Egypt experience.
Female population
 Breast cancer is the leading type of cancer in women and overall representing 1 in every 6 cases. Leukemia comes in second place followed by lymphoma, colon cancer, brain & nervous system.
Male population
 Leukemia tops the list of most likely to occur below 40 years of age, while colon and prostate cancers top the list after the age of 60. Other types of cancer are in the lymphatic system, the brain and the nervous system appearing in males between 20 & 50 years of age.
 This study shows that the increase in cancer cases might be due to the increase in the early detection tests as a result of increased awareness programs about cancer.

Thanks to advances in medical research, remarkable progress is being made against cancer. However, the study is a clear reminder that more effort is needed under prevention and early detection of cancer which significantly increases survival rates and at the same time reduces treatment costs.

To read the full bulletin, please visit GlobeMed Egypt website www.globemedegypt.com



GlobeMed Egypt releases the Cancer Bulletin: Depicting New Cancer Cases among its Population of insured members

افتتاح المقر الجديد لمعهد التأمين في مصر التابع للاتحاد المصري للتأمين اليوم السبت الموافق 16 يناير 2021



علاء الزهيري يفوز بجائزة رجل التأمين لعام ٢٠٢١ بالشرق الاوسط وشمال افريقيا

MENAIR

AWARDS 2021

Winner

Insurance Professional of the Year
**Mr. Alaa El-Zoheiry - gig
Egypt**



افضل رجل تأمين علي مستوي الشرق الاوسط وشمال افريقيا: علاء الزهيري رئيس للاتحاد والعضو المنتدب للمجموعة العربية المصرية للتأمين

اعلنت مؤسسة MENA IR ومقرها لندن الفائزين بجائزة افضل عناصر التأمين علي مستوي الشرق الاوسط وشمال افريقيا.

واختارت لجنة التحكيم الاستاذ علاء الزهيري - العضو المنتدب لشركة gig للتأمين ورئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين افضل رجل تأمين علي مستوي الشرق الاوسط وشمال افريقيا.

وتعد هذه الجائزة من اهم جوائز التأمين حيث انها تعتمد بالاساس علي الانجازات التي تم تحقيقها خلال عام كامل سواء في مجال التأمين او اعادة التأمين

واعلنت المؤسسة اسماء كافة الفائزين لجوائزها المختلفة مثل افضل شركة تأمين ، افضل شركة اعادة تأمين ، افضل شركة وساطة تأمين ، افضل رجل تأمين ، وغيرها

وقد اجتمعت لجنة التحكيم عبر خاصية الفيديو كونفرانس عدة مرات واعلنت قائمة الفائزين في اجتماعها يوم ٢٧ يناير.

افتتاح المقر الجديد لمعهد التأمين في مصر التابع للاتحاد المصري للتأمين اليوم السبت الموافق 16 يناير 2021

رئيس الهيئة العامة للرقابة المالية والأستاذ علاء الزهيري رئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين ورئيس مجلس إدارة المعهد وبحضور لفيف من قيادات ورؤساء شركات التأمين العاملة في مصر

وكانت الجمعية العامة للاتحاد المصري للتأمين قد وافقت على تقديم دعم بقيمة 5 ملايين جنيه لتمويل المقر الجديد للمعهد ايماناً منها بأهمية التدريب والدراسات المهنية في الارتقاء بقطاع التأمين المصري.

وجدير بالذكر ان معهد التأمين بمصر أنشئ عام 1975 وتم انضمامه لمعهد التأمين القانوني بلندن في عام 1976 من خلال المؤتمر العام الذي عقد بمدينة كوفينترى بالمملكة المتحدة ، حيث اصبح المعهد الأول من نوعه في المنطقة العربية ، كما يعتبر المعهد الثامن عشر في ترتيب أنشائه عالمياً.

وهو مركز دولي معتمد بالدول العربية والافريقية والاسيوية لامتحانات المعاهد الدولية ومعهد التأمين القانوني بلندن ومعهد إدارة تأمينات الحياة ومعهد اكتاب تأمينات الممتلكات والمسئوليات بالولايات المتحدة الامريكية.

وقد أنشئ المعهد لتحقيق هدفين رئيسيين وهما :

1- نشر الثقافة التأمينية على مستوى رفيع من التخصص الفني في سوق التأمين .

2- العمل على تزويد السوق المصري والعربي للتأمين باجيال من الخريجين الحاصلة على درجة رفيق بمعهد التأمين القانوني بلندن ليساعدوا بعملهم في رفع المستوى المهني لصناعة التأمين

ويسعى معهد التأمين القانوني الى تحقيق أعلى درجات الالتزام بمبادئ وأخلاقيات العمل سواء من العاملين او الدارسين او الخريجين وكل من يتعامل معه ويعتبر معهد التأمين بمصر ان طريق النجاح هو العمل من خلال فريق عمل متجانس من العاملين والخبراء والاستشاريين ويلتزم المعهد بتحقيق جميع الاحتياجات الحالية والمستقبلية لصناعة التأمين سواء كانوا أفراداً أو هيئات باعتبار أن التطوير والتجديد المستمر هو طريق إلى التميز

وقال الأستاذ محمد الدشيش الرئيس التنفيذي للمعهد ان المبنى الجديد صمم وفقاً لأحدث التقنيات ومجهز بقاعات تدريب على اعلى مستوى بالإضافة الى غرف التحكم وكاميرات مراقبة لقاعات الامتحانات ليتواءم مع الرسالة المستهدفة للمعهد على مستوى السوقين المصري والعربي لاسيما بعد الحصول على موافقة معهد التأمين القانوني بلندن على اجراء الامتحانات الخاصة به بمعهد التأمين بمصر

وقال الأستاذ علاء الزهيري رئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين ورئيس مجلس إدارة المعهد "يهدف المقر الجديد للمعهد التوافق مع الخطة الخاصة بتطوير وزيادة الوعي التأميني وتنمية الكوادر البشرية بالسوقين المصري والعربي والتي تتضمن التدريب وجها لوجه وعبر المنصات الإلكترونية"

وتتضمن خطة تطوير المعهد إضافة المقر الجديد لتدريس بعض مناهج الدبلومات التي تقدم للدارسين باللغة الإنجليزية وتنميتها بما يتناسب مع تطورات الأسواق العالمية ويقدم معهد التأمين 4 دبلومات متخصصة بتأمينات الحياة والطبي وإعادة التأمين والتسويق .

ومن المعروف ان عضوية المعهد ستكون الزامية لكل الشركات العاملة بالسوق المصري طبقاً للنظام الأساسي المعتمد من هيئة الرقابة المالية باعتباره كإحدى الجهات المعاونة المسجلة بالهيئة وسيصبح كيان تعليمي مستقل تحت اشراف الاتحاد المصري للتأمين بعد إقرار النظام الاساسي من مجلس الوزراء.



افتتاح المقر الجديد لمعهد التأمين في مصر: رئيس الهيئة العامة للرقابة المالية والأستاذ علاء الزهيري رئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين ورئيس مجلس إدارة المعهد وبحضور لفيف من قيادات ورؤساء شركات التأمين العاملة في مصر

افتتح معالي وزير المالية الدكتور محمد معيط المقر الجديد لمعهد التأمين في مصر اليوم السبت الموافق 16/1/2021 وذلك بحضور المستشار رضا عبد المعطي نائب

ورشة عمل حول التأمين متناهي الصغر بالتعاون مع شبكة التأمين متناهي الصغر Microinsurance Network

في ضوء التعاون المثمر بين الاتحاد المصري للتأمين وشبكة التأمين متناهي الصغر Microinsurance Network واهتمام الجهتين بالشمول التأميني والوصول للفئات التي لا تصل إليها الخدمات التأمينية.

جاري التحضير لعقد ورشة عمل افتراضية بالتعاون مع شبكة التأمين متناهي الصغر Microinsurance Network، وستكون أول ورشة عمل مقدمة من منصة الاتحاد SPI HUB والتي ستكون مسؤولة عن تقديم ورش عمل وندوات لزيادة الوعي في سوق التأمين المصري.

هذا وتأتي ورشة العمل تحت عنوان:

“Virtual Country workshop: Moving the Needle – Egypt”

هذا وستعقد الورشة باللغة الإنجليزية وذلك يوم الثلاثاء الموافق 2 فبراير 2021 من الساعة 2 الي الساعة 4 عصرًا.

تتضمن ورشة العمل استعراض لبيانات تقرير Microinsurance Landscape 2020 / المنظور العالمي للتأمين متناهي الصغر 2020 مع التركيز على سوق التأمين متناهي الصغر في جمهورية مصر العربية وأهم التحديات والفرص للنمو بهذا السوق الحيوي، كما سيتم مناقشة العوائق والحلول الممكنة لدفع وتطوير سوق التأمين متناهي الصغر وتحقيق الشمول التأميني.

هذا وقد صرح الأستاذ علاء الزهيري رئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين ان التعاون بين الاتحاد والشبكة يأتي ضمن خطة عمل الاتحاد المصري للتأمين لعام 2021 والتي تعتبر أحد الشراكات التي تخدم استراتيجية الاتحاد في الوصول الى الفئات التي لا تصل إليها الخدمات التأمينية والتي تتماشى مع اهداف شبكة التأمين متناهي الصغر Microinsurance Network الخاصة بتحقيق الشمول التأميني.

قامت شبكة التأمين متناهي الصغر منذ نشأتها بتقديم سلسلة تقارير دولية حول التأمين متناهي الصغر تحت اسم Microinsurance Landscape والتي تمثل معيارًا فريدًا يتبع اتجاهات وتطور منتجات وخدمات التأمين متناهي الصغر في الأسواق المختلفة ومدى تحقيق هذه الأسواق للشمول التأميني.

وفي عام 2020 شهدت الدراسة (تقرير Microinsurance Landscape) لأول مرة مشاركة 194 شركة ومقدم خدمات التأمين متناهي الصغر في 30 دولة في إفريقيا وآسيا وأمريكا اللاتينية ومنطقة البحر الكاريبي. كما قام الاتحاد المصري للتأمين بترجمة ” Microinsurance Landscape 2020 ” إلى اللغة العربية حيث ستكون هذه هي المرة الأولى التي يتم فيها اصدار نسخه باللغة العربية للتقرير.

هذا وتعتبر شبكة التأمين متناهي الصغر Microinsurance Network من أهم المنصات العالمية التي تجمع بين شركات التأمين والهيئات التنظيمية ووكالات التنمية وواضعي السياسات لإيجاد حلول تأمينية للمخاطر التي تواجه المواطنين المعرضين للخطر في العالم وتهدف إلى تحسين قدرة الأسر ذات الدخل المنخفض عن طريق برامج التأمين متناهي الصغر على مستوى العالم من خلال تحسين استيعابهم للشمول التأميني والمساهمة في تحسين البيئة العامة للتأمين. هذا ويقع مقر شبكة التأمين متناهي الصغر في لوكسمبورغ وتضم حوالي 400 خبير و 70 منظمة في أكثر من 50 دولة.

هذا ومن الجدير بالذكر انه سيشترك في الورشة كلا من:

- الأستاذ / علاء الزهيري، رئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين.
- الأستاذ / هشام رمضان، مساعد رئيس الهيئة العامة للرقابة المالية.
- الأستاذة / كاترين بولفرماخر ، المدير التنفيذي لشبكة التأمين متناهي الصغر .
- وبيدر الورشة، الدكتور / طارق سيف، الأمين العام للاتحاد المصري للتأمين.



افتتاح المقر الجديد لمعهد التأمين في مصر التابع للاتحاد المصري للتأمين اليوم السبت الموافق 16 يناير 2021

اليوم السبت الموافق 16/1/2021 وذلك بحضور المستشار رضا عبد المعطي نائب رئيس الهيئة العامة للرقابة المالية والأستاذ علاء الزهيري رئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين ورئيس مجلس إدارة المعهد وبحضور لفيف من قيادات ورؤساء شركات التأمين العاملة في مصر.

وكانت الجمعية العامة للاتحاد المصري للتأمين قد وافقت على تقديم دعم بقيمة 5 ملايين جنيه لتمويل المقر الجديد للمعهد إيماناً منها بأهمية التدريب والدراسات المهنية في الارتقاء بقطاع التأمين المصري.

وجدير بالذكر ان معهد التأمين بمصر أنشئ عام 1975 وتم انضمامه لمعهد التأمين القانوني بلندن في عام 1976 من خلال المؤتمر العام الذي عقد بمدينة كوفينترى بالمملكة المتحدة ، حيث أصبح المعهد الأول من نوعه في المنطقة العربية ، كما يعتبر المعهد الثامن عشر في ترتيب أنشائه عالمياً.

وهو مركز دولي معتمد بالدول العربية والأفريقية والاسيوية لامتحانات المعاهد الدولية ومعهد التأمين القانوني بلندن ومعهد إدارة تأمينات الحياة ومعهد اكتاب تأمينات الممتلكات والمسئوليات بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.

وقد أنشئ المعهد لتحقيق هدفين رئيسيين وهما :

- 1- نشر الثقافة التأمينية على مستوى رفيع من التخصص الفني في سوق التأمين .
- 2- العمل على تزويد السوق المصري والعربي للتأمين باجيال من الخريجين الحاصلة على درجة رفيق بمعهد التأمين القانوني بلندن ليساعدوا بعملهم في رفع المستوى المهني لصناعة التأمين.

ويسعى معهد التأمين القانوني الى تحقيق أعلى درجات الالتزام بمبادئ وأخلاقيات العمل سواء من العاملين او الدارسين او الخريجين وكل من يتعامل معه ويعتبر معهد التأمين بمصر ان طريق النجاح هو العمل من خلال فريق عمل متجانس من العاملين والخبراء والاستشاريين ويلتزم المعهد بتحقيق جميع الاحتياجات الحالية والمستقبلية لصناعة التأمين سواء كانوا أفراداً أو هيئات باعتبار أن التطوير والتجديد المستمر هو طريق إلى التميز.

وقال الأستاذ محمد الدشيش الرئيس التنفيذي للمعهد ان المبنى الجديد صمم وفقاً لأحدث التقنيات ومجهز بقاعات تدريب على اعلى مستوى بالإضافة الى غرف التحكم وكاميرات مراقبة لقاعات الامتحانات ليتواءم مع الرسالة المستهدفة للمعهد على مستوى السوقين المصري والعربي لاسيما بعد الحصول على موافقة معهد التأمين القانوني بلندن على اجراء الامتحانات الخاصة به بمعهد التأمين بمصر.

وقال الأستاذ علاء الزهيري رئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين ورئيس مجلس إدارة المعهد "يهدف المقر الجديد للمعهد التوافق مع الخطة الخاصة بتطوير وزيادة الوعي التأميني وتنمية الكوادر البشرية بالسوقين المصري والعربي والتي تتضمن التدريب وجها لوجه وعبر المنصات الالكترونية".

وتتضمن خطة تطوير المعهد إضافة المقر الجديد لتدريب بعض مناهج الدبلومات التي تقدم للدارسين باللغة الإنجليزية وتنميتها بما يتناسب مع تطورات الأسواق العالمية ويقدم معهد التأمين 4 دبلومات متخصصة بتأمينات الحياة والطبي وإعادة التأمين والتسويق .

ومن المعروف ان عضوية المعهد ستكون الزامية لكل الشركات العاملة بالسوق المصري طبقاً للنظام الأساسي المعتمد من هيئة الرقابة المالية باعتباره كإحدى الجهات المعاونة المسجلة بالهيئة وسيصبح كيان تعليمي مستقل تحت اشراف الاتحاد المصري للتأمين بعد إقرار النظام الاساسي من مجلس الوزراء.



افتتاح المقر الجديد لمعهد التأمين في مصر: رئيس الهيئة العامة للرقابة المالية والأستاذ علاء الزهيري رئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين ورئيس مجلس إدارة المعهد وبحضور لفيف من قيادات ورؤساء شركات التأمين العاملة في مصر

افتتح معالي وزير المالية الدكتور محمد معيط المقر الجديد لمعهد التأمين في مصر

اللجنة التنظيمية لمؤتمر العقبة الثامن للتأمين تلتقي مدير عام هيئة تنشيط السياحة في الأردن

بدورته الثامنة AqabaConf2021 المقرر عقده للفترة من 5/30 ولغاية 2021/6/2 في فندق انتركونتيننتال العقبة بالتعاون مع الاتحاد العام العربي للتأمين، التقى ظهر يوم الإثنين الموافق 2021/1/11 كل من المهندس ماجد سميرات رئيس مجلس إدارة الاتحاد ورئيس اللجنة التنظيمية للمؤتمر والأستاذ ماهر الحسين مدير الاتحاد الأردني لشركات التأمين وعضو اللجنة التنظيمية للمؤتمر عطوفة السيد عبد الرزاق عربيات مدير عام هيئة تنشيط السياحة في الأردن.

وجاء الاجتماع لإطلاع هيئة تنشيط السياحة الأردنية على استعدادات الاتحاد الأردني لشركات التأمين لعقد المؤتمر القادم الذي يأتي بعد غياب زاد عن عام ونصف للمؤتمرات الدولية سواء داخل المملكة أو خارجها نتيجة جائحة كورونا، وكذلك وضع هيئة تنشيط السياحة بصورة الإجراءات التي تم إنجازها لإستقبال المشاركين في المؤتمر بدءاً من تجهيز الموقع الإلكتروني للمؤتمر، www.AqabaConf.com ومروراً بإنجاز البرنامجين العلمي والإجتماعي واختيار المحاضرين وكافة الترتيبات اللوجستية لإنجاح أعمال المؤتمر.

ومن جانبه، أعرب عطوفة مدير هيئة تنشيط السياحة الأردنية عن دعم الهيئة لجهود الاتحاد الأردني لشركات التأمين في تسويق الأردن سياحياً من خلال هذا المؤتمر الدولي الهام الذي أصبح واحداً من المؤتمرات التأمينية المهمة في المنطقة لاستقطابه ما يزيد عن مشارك من كبرى قادة التأمين 650-600 في العالم، وكما أكد على أن دعوة الاتحاد الأردني لشركات التأمين لعقد هذا المؤتمر في ظل هذه المرحلة الحرجة التي يمر بها العالم يؤشر على تضافر جهود القطاعين العام والخاص لدعم القطاع السياحي سيقابله دعم مطلق من هيئة تنشيط السياحة لهذا الحدث العالمي.

ومن جانبهم، شكر ممثلوا الاتحاد عربيات على دعمه لجهود الاتحاد واستعداد هيئة تنشيط السياحة في الأردن لتسويق هذا المؤتمر عالمياً من خلال المنصات المعتمدة للمؤتمرات والنشاطات والإستفادة من خبرات وعلاقات وجهود هيئة تنشيط السياحة للتعريف بهذا المؤتمر بشكل أكبر، وبما يسهم في إنجاحه واستقطاب شريحة أكبر من المشاركين وبما يساهم أيضاً بتسويق الأردن سياحياً والمساهمة بدعم القطاع السياحي وقطاع الفنادق والنقل السياحي والقطاعات الأخرى المرتبطة للتخفيف على هذه القطاعات بعد جائحة كورونا.



اللجنة التنظيمية لمؤتمر العقبة الثامن للتأمين: المهندس ماجد سميرات رئيس مجلس إدارة الاتحاد ورئيس اللجنة التنظيمية للمؤتمر والأستاذ ماهر الحسين مدير الاتحاد الأردني لشركات التأمين وعضو اللجنة التنظيمية للمؤتمر عطوفة السيد عبد الرزاق عربيات مدير عام هيئة تنشيط السياحة في الأردن

المسؤولية المجتمعية ودور صناعة التأمين وإعادة التأمين في دعم أهداف المسؤولية المجتمعية لتحقيق التنمية المستدامة

مفهوم المسؤولية الاجتماعية أصبح يتردد على مسامعنا كثيراً في السنوات الأخيرة في عالم الاقتصاد والاعمال، وكثيراً ما يطرح هذا المفهوم بكافة وسائل الاعلام.

وقد تزايد الاهتمام بالمسؤولية الاجتماعية للشركات -"Corporate Social Responsibility" في معظم البلدان، وأصبح له دور كبير في تحويل الشركات إلى شركاء في تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة Sustainable Development من خلال هذه الأنشطة.

ومما لا شك فيه ان المسؤولية الاجتماعية لها دور كبير وفعال في تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة من خلال تقديم الدعم للفئات الفقيرة ومحدودة الدخل وتقديم الحلول للمشاكل الرئيسية التي يواجهونها كتحسين مستويات المعيشة والمساهمة في توفير حياة كريمة للأفراد والمجتمعات ومحاربة الفقر ودعم برامج التأهيل والتطوير الذاتي وخلق فرص عمل مناسبة لهم.

فمن خلال برامج المسؤولية الاجتماعية يمكن المشاركة في تحقيق التقدم الاجتماعي والنمو الاقتصادي وقد أصبح واضحاً الآن أن أهداف التنمية المستدامة لا يمكن تحقيقها بدون مساهمة القطاعات والمؤسسات المختلفة من خلال مبادرات المسؤولية الاجتماعية.

هذا وقد اهتمت الحكومة المصرية بموضوعات عديدة تهتم بالعمل المجتمعي التنموي بكافة المؤسسات والقطاعات العاملة بالدولة بالإضافة الى التركيز على دور هذه الكيانات في دعم دور الدولة في تحقيق العدالة المجتمعية جنباً الى جنب مع جهودات الدولة في وضع إطار وخطط عمل رئيسية خاصة بعدالة التوزيع للدخل والتنمية والاستثمارات بعدالة على مستوى محافظات الجمهورية، وخاصة في المناطق النائية ومحافظات الصعيد الأكثر فقراً بهدف الوصول الى الفئات التي لا تصل اليها خدمات الدولة.

حيث تعتبر المسؤولية الاجتماعية جزء من اقتصاد السوق حيث أن التفاوت الكبير في توزيع الدخل والثروات يؤدي إلى تمزق وحدة المجتمع ويمكن للمسؤولية الاجتماعية أن تساهم في إعادة التوزيع العادل للدخل.

كذلك لا يمكننا ان ننسى الدور الكبير لمنظمات ومؤسسات المجتمع الدولي في دعم أهداف التنمية المستدامة وتفعيل الأدوار والمبادرات المجتمعية بها كبرنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي حول العالم Unit- ed Nations Development Programme ((UNDP)) وغيرها من المنظمات والبرامج التي تعمل على الوصول الي الفئات التي لا تصل اليها الخدمات الأساسية والقيام بدعمهم وتمكينهم من خلال مجموعة من المبادرات والمشروعات.

وقد تزايد اهتمام قطاعات الاعمال المختلفة في الفترة الأخيرة بالمسؤولية الاجتماعية والتنمية المستدامة وأصبحت تواجه اليوم تحديات اجتماعية واقتصادية كبيرة في مسيرة عملها وتحمل مسؤولياتها وتفاعلها مع المجتمع سعياً لتحقيق أهدافها الاقتصادية بالإضافة إلى تحقيق احتياجات المجتمع ويكتسب الدور المجتمعي للشركات أهمية متزايدة في العالم أجمع وفي الدول العربية وفي مصر على وجه الخصوص.

ولا تعني المسؤولية الاجتماعية لقطاع الأعمال تخلى الحكومات عن مسؤولياتها الاجتماعية بل يأتي ذلك مشاركة وانسجاماً مع دورها، ويفترض ألا يكون نشاط الشركات معزولاً عن أهداف المجتمع والأهداف التنموية كما يفترض أيضاً ألا يكون تحقيق الأرباح على حساب العاملين والبيئة والمجتمع.

مفهوم المسؤولية الاجتماعية في قطاعات الاعمال:

تعني المسؤولية الاجتماعية بأن يكون البعد الاجتماعي والأخلاقي إلى جانب البعد الاقتصادي وتحقيق نمو في الأرباح والعوائد هو المحدد لسلوك قطاع الأعمال من خلال التزامه الدائم بمتطلبات التنمية المجتمعية وتحسين وعيه ومستوي وظروف الحياة لأفراد المجتمع.

ويتضمن التزام قطاع الأعمال التركيز على القوانين والمعايير الأخلاقية، من حيث تأثير نشاط قطاع الأعمال على العاملين، والمستهلكين، وعلى البيئة الداخلية والخارجية والمجتمعات المحلية والمجتمع ككل.

وينبغي فهم المسؤولية الاجتماعية على أنها استثمار في المجتمع أكثر من كونها عمل خيري، فهي تتعدى العمل الخيري التطوعي بحيث تصل إلى علاقة يستفيد منها المانح والمتلقي.

أهم مجالات ومحاور وأشكال المسؤولية الاجتماعية في قطاعات الاعمال المختلفة :

- احترام قواعد القانون والتوافق مع القوانين وإدارة النشاطات والأعمال وفق مبادئ وقواعد أخلاقية وتعتبر حوكمة الشركات وأخلاقيات الشركات جزء من هذه المسؤولية.

مفهوم المسؤولية الاجتماعية أصبح يتردد على مسامعنا كثيراً في السنوات الأخيرة في عالم الاقتصاد والاعمال، وكثيراً ما يطرح هذا المفهوم بكافة وسائل الاعلام.

وقد تزايد الاهتمام بالمسؤولية الاجتماعية للشركات -"Corporate Social Responsibility" في معظم البلدان، وأصبح له دور كبير في تحويل الشركات إلى شركاء في تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة Sustainable Development من خلال هذه الأنشطة.

ومما لا شك فيه ان المسؤولية الاجتماعية لها دور

كبير وفعال في تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة من خلال تقديم الدعم للفئات الفقيرة ومحدودة الدخل وتقديم الحلول للمشاكل الرئيسية التي يواجهونها كتحسين مستويات المعيشة والمساهمة في توفير حياة كريمة للأفراد والمجتمعات ومحاربة الفقر ودعم برامج التأهيل والتطوير الذاتي وخلق فرص عمل مناسبة لهم.

فمن خلال برامج المسؤولية الاجتماعية يمكن المشاركة في تحقيق التقدم الاجتماعي والنمو الاقتصادي وقد أصبح واضحاً الآن أن أهداف التنمية المستدامة لا يمكن تحقيقها بدون مساهمة القطاعات والمؤسسات المختلفة من خلال مبادرات المسؤولية الاجتماعية.

هذا وقد اهتمت الحكومة المصرية بموضوعات عديدة تهتم بالعمل المجتمعي التنموي بكافة المؤسسات والقطاعات العاملة بالدولة بالإضافة الى التركيز على دور هذه الكيانات في دعم دور الدولة في تحقيق العدالة المجتمعية جنباً الى جنب مع جهودات الدولة في وضع إطار وخطط عمل رئيسية خاصة بعدالة التوزيع للدخل والتنمية والاستثمارات بعدالة على مستوى محافظات الجمهورية، وخاصة في المناطق النائية ومحافظات الصعيد الأكثر فقراً بهدف الوصول الى الفئات التي لا تصل اليها خدمات الدولة.

حيث تعتبر المسؤولية الاجتماعية جزء من اقتصاد السوق حيث أن التفاوت الكبير في توزيع الدخل والثروات يؤدي إلى تمزق وحدة المجتمع ويمكن للمسؤولية الاجتماعية أن تساهم في إعادة التوزيع العادل للدخل.

كذلك لا يمكننا ان ننسى الدور الكبير لمنظمات ومؤسسات المجتمع الدولي في دعم أهداف التنمية المستدامة وتفعيل الأدوار والمبادرات المجتمعية بها كبرنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي حول العالم Unit- ed Nations Development Programme ((UNDP)) وغيرها من المنظمات والبرامج التي تعمل على الوصول الي الفئات التي لا تصل اليها الخدمات الأساسية والقيام بدعمهم وتمكينهم من خلال مجموعة من المبادرات والمشروعات.

وقد تزايد اهتمام قطاعات الاعمال المختلفة في الفترة الأخيرة بالمسؤولية الاجتماعية والتنمية المستدامة وأصبحت تواجه اليوم تحديات اجتماعية واقتصادية كبيرة في مسيرة عملها وتحمل مسؤولياتها وتفاعلها مع المجتمع سعياً لتحقيق أهدافها الاقتصادية بالإضافة إلى تحقيق احتياجات المجتمع ويكتسب الدور المجتمعي للشركات أهمية متزايدة في العالم أجمع وفي الدول العربية وفي مصر على وجه الخصوص.

من أفراد المجتمع بالطعام والمواد الغذائية.

- الاهتمام بمجالات التعليم: منها على سبيل



سوق التأمين المصري:

يقوم قطاع التأمين المصري بدور حيوي في تقديم الدعم لمشروعات المسؤولية الاجتماعية التي تهدف إلى تنمية المجتمع والنهوض به، بالإضافة إلى التعاون مع الدولة في مجالات الرعاية الاجتماعية من خلال المساهمة في العديد من المشروعات والمساهمة مع بعض البنوك التي تمنح قروض لمحدودي الدخل وصغار المستثمرين.

بالإضافة إلى المساهمة في النهوض بالتعليم والبحث العلمي والتطوير من خلال القيام بإنشاء معامل للكمبيوتر ومدرجات بالجامعات المصرية ودعم لصندوق الاستثمار القومي للخيري للتعليم تحت إشراف وزارة التخطيط وذلك بالإضافة إلى المساهمة في بناء المدارس وصيانتها وترميمها وتجهيزها بجانب تقديم برامج وأدوات مساعدة للطلاب من ذوي الإعاقة، وأيضاً المساهمة في تطوير المظهر الحضاري للدولة عن طريق زراعة الأشجار وبناء النافورات بميادين القاهرة وجميع المحافظات مصر.

بالإضافة إلى دعم المستشفيات ، ويأتي هذا إيماناً من القطاع بأهمية المسؤولية الاجتماعية في إطار تبني المبادئ والاهداف الخاصة بتفعيل القيم الأساسية لحقوق الإنسان والعمل والبيئة ومكافحة الفساد حيث أن المساهمة في المسؤولية الاجتماعية تعد استثمار طويل الأجل ينعكس على القطاع كما يدعم ثقة المجتمع في صناعة التأمين.

دور الاتحاد المصري للتأمين الاجتماعي تجاه المسؤولية الاجتماعية:

إيماناً من الاتحاد المصري للتأمين بأهمية دوره في المسؤولية الاجتماعية في وكجزء من استراتيجيته لتحقيق اهداف التنمية المستدامة ، قام الاتحاد المصري للتأمين بالعديد من الأنشطة منها على سبيل المثال وليس الحصر:

1. إطلاق مبادرة الاتحاد المصري للتأمين ” توقف عن الكتابة ... أنقذ حياة“:

تكثف الحكومات في جميع انحاء العالم جهودها في مجال السلامة على الطرق من أجل الوفاء بالتزاماتها التي تعهدت بها في جدول أعمال التنمية المستدامة 2030، ومما لا شك فيه ان موضوع الوفيات بسبب حوادث الطرق وهو العنصر السادس في الهدف الثالث من اهداف التنمية المستدامة من الموضوعات التي تقلق الجميع على مستوى العالم والمستوي الإقليمي والمحلي.

وفقا للتقرير العالمي للسلامة على الطرق والصادر في عام 2018، فإن الإصابات الناجمة عن حوادث المرور هي ثامن أكبر مسبب للوفاة وهي السبب الأول لوفيات الأطفال الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين 5 سنوات و14 سنة والبالغين الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين 15 و29 سنة، فالعالم يواجه كل 24 ثانية حالة وفاة بسبب حوادث الطرق.

وجمهورية مصر العربية ليست بعيدة عن ذلك فوفقاً للأرقام المبلغ عنها رسمياً فإننا نواجه حوالي 22 حالة وفاة يومياً في المتوسط بمصر بسبب حوادث الطرق.

بينما تصل تقديرات منظمة الصحة العالمية للوفيات الناجمة عن حوادث المرور بجمهورية مصر العربية لعام 2016 الى 9,287 حاله سنوياً.

وفي ضوء المسؤولية الاجتماعية للاتحاد المصري للتأمين وشركاته تجاه المجتمع وحرصاً من الاتحاد المصري للتأمين على ان يكون جزء من تحقيق اهداف التنمية المستدامة والتي يأتي خفض معدل الوفيات الناجمة عن حوادث المرور كجزء منها. وكجزء من عمل شركات التأمين في المساهمة في الحد من المخاطر التي تواجه الافراد والممتلكات والمجتمع ، فقد رأى الاتحاد المصري للتأمين أنه يجب ان يكون له دور هام ومؤثر في الحد من الحوادث على الطرق ليس فقط من خلال وثائق التأمين والتغطيات المختلفة ولكن أيضاً من خلال نشر الوعي عن طريق تقديم مجموعة من المبادرات المختلفة الهدف العام منها هو “ تأمين السلامة على الطرق وبناءً عليه جاءت فكرة مبادرة توقف عن الكتابة ... انقذ حياة Stop Save a life ... texting والتي وافق على تدشنها والبدء في فاعليتها مجلس إدارة الاتحاد المصري للتأمين بتاريخ 7 ابريل 2019 تحت رعاية وزارة الشباب والرياضة والهيئة العامة للرقابة المالية.

وتركز مبادرة الاتحاد المصري للتأمين على التوعية بأضرار استخدام الهواتف الذكية أثناء القيادة لإرسال الرسائل أو اجراء المحادثات التي تؤدي الى زيادة معدلات التعرض للحوادث أو التسبب في وقوعها حيث تسبب الهواتف الذكية في وقوع 1.6 مليون حادث سيارة سنوياً حول العالم، نتج عنها إصابة نصف مليون شخص ما بين قتلٍ وجرحٍ.

هذا وقد تم تدشين المبادرة من خلال مؤتمر صحفي للإعلان بمركز التعليم المدني بالجزيرة وحضر المؤتمر معالي وزير الشباب والرياضة ومعالي رئيس الهيئة العامة للرقابة المالية ونائب رئيس هيئة الرقابة المالية ورئيس الاتحاد المصري للتأمين. كما شارك في المؤتمر، رؤساء وأعضاء مجالس إدارات من شركات التأمين، ولقيف من الاعلاميين والصحفيين في مصر.

وقد تضمنت المبادرة الأنشطة التالية:

ماراثون الاتحاد المصري للتأمين الثاني تحت شعار توقف عن الكتابة ... أنقذ حياة:

تحت رعاية وزارة الشباب والرياضة والهيئة العامة للرقابة المالية، أقيم بمركز شباب الجزيرة الماراثون الثاني للاتحاد المصري للتأمين ” التأمين لحياة أفضل“ بتاريخ 3 مايو 2019 تحت شعار ”توقف عن الكتابة ... أنقذ حياة“ هذا وقد شارك في الماراثون حوالي 1700 مشارك (ذكور وإناث وأطفال) هذا بالإضافة الي مجموعة من المحترفين برياضة العدو وصل عددهم الى 800 مشارك (ذكور وإناث) بالإضافة الى حوالي 50 مشارك بموتوسيكل ودراجة.

تصميم حملة إعلانية كبيرة على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي المختلفة وفتوات شعار ”توقف عن الكتابة ... أنقذ حياة“:

دشن الاتحاد المصري للتأمين حملة توعية إعلانية كبيرة على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي المختلفة وعلى

فتوات الراديو الأكثر استماعاً عن مخاطر استخدام الهاتف الذكي اثناء القيادة تحت شعار ” توقف عن الكتابة ... أنقذ حياة ” هذا ومن الجدير بالذكر ان الحملة حققت نسب مشاهدة واستماع كبيرة جدا وكان لها مردود إيجابي على المجتمع.

2. الوصول للفئات التي لا تصل اليها الخدمات التأمينية، الحملة الاعلانية على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي

”امن قبل ما تحصل“ عام 2019

في ضوء نسب المشاهدة المرتفعة للحملة الاعلانية والمبادرات المجتمعية على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي المختلفة قام الاتحاد المصري للتأمين بإعادة تقديم حملته الاعلانية ”امن قبل ما تحصل“ ولكن هذه المرة على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي المختلفة والتي تهدف الى نشر الوعي التأميني بين المواطنين بأهمية التأمين في مواجهة المخاطر التي يمكن ان يتعرضوا لها وقد كان التركيز الأكبر لهذه الحملة على التأمين متناهي الصغر.

ومما لا شك فيه، ان جميع هذه الأنشطة كان لها أثرها الإيجابي على بناء صورة ذهنية إيجابية عن دور قطاع التأمين المصري في دعم المجتمع المصري ومشاركته في مواجهة المخاطر وتقليل الاثار المترتبة عن تلك المخاطر.

3. وافقت الجمعية العامة للاتحاد المصري للتأمين في اجتماعها المنعقد بتاريخ 23 ابريل 2020 على التبرع لصندوق تحيا مصر بمبلغ 10 مليون جنيهه مصري لدعم أنشطة الصندوق في التصدي ومواجهة التداعيات الناتجة عن انتشار فيروس كورونا المستجد.

هذا ويأتي ذلك في إطار أنشطة الصندوق في التصدي ومواجهة التداعيات الناتجة عن انتشار الفيروس، وتأتي مشاركة الاتحاد المصري في مبادرة الصندوق من خلال المساهمة في توفير عدد من الأجهزة والمستلزمات الطبية المطلوبة لمعاونة القطاع الطبي، فضلاً عن المشاركة في توفير المواد الغذائية للعمالة غير المنتظمة والأسر الأولى بالرعاية لتخفيف عبء تكاليف المعيشة عن عاتقهم خلال الأزمة.

4. في ضوء المسؤولية الاجتماعية لقطاع التأمين المصري وتحقيقاً لاهداف التنمية المستدامة للاتحاد المصري للتأمين، تم تشكيل لجنة ”إدارة حساب المساهمة في علاج العاملين في قطاع التأمين“ طبقاً لقرار رئيس الهيئة العامة للرقابة المالية رقم (1129) لتلقى طلبات المساهمة في علاج العاملين بقطاع التأمين من خلال الحساب المنشأ لهذا الغرض بالاتحاد المصري للتأمين.

5. قيام الاتحاد المصري للتأمين بإطلاق ”مبادرة الخير ” لقطاع التأمين بالتعاون مع جمعية الأورمان بشأن الأسر الأكثر تضرراً من الطقس السيئ وفيروس كورونا فيما يخص المواد الغذائية والتكافل النقدي وتقضى هذه المبادرة بتبرع كل من يريد من العاملين بالقطاع سواء الأفراد أو الشركات بالتبرع للجمعية بمبلغ ألف جنيه لكل أسرة.

6. توقيع بروتوكولان للتعاون بين الاتحاد

المثال وليس الحصر، إقامة معاهد تعليمية وفنية لرفع كفاءة الخريجين الجدد وإعدادهم للدخول في سوق العمل، وكذلك دعم الطلبة المحتاجين وتشجيعهم على مواصلة دراساتهم العليا في الداخل والخارج، هذا فضلا عن المساهمة في إقامة مختبرات علمية في بعض الجامعات.

• الاهتمام بالمجالات الصحية: منها على سبيل المثال وليس الحصر، إقامة مستوصفات طبية، وغرف عمليات كاملة في بعض المستشفيات والمساهمة في إقامة مستشفيات للأمراض الخطيرة كالسرطان والمتوطنة مثل الفشل الكلوي، وفيروسات الكبد، والعلاج بالخارج، وتعويض الأفراد عن أي أضرار تلحق بهم نتيجة العمل بالشركة.

• الاهتمام بالأنشطة الثقافية: منها على سبيل المثال وليس الحصر ، إقامة المكتبات في المناطق الفقيرة ونشر الكتب وتمويل المعارض، وإصدار مجلات علمية وثقافية توزع في الندوات والمؤتمرات.

• الاهتمام بالأنشطة الرياضية: منها على سبيل المثال وليس الحصر ، دعم الأندية الرياضية، والمساهمة في توفير البنية التحتية ومرافق الملاعب الرياضية والمنتزهات لصالح الأطفال والنساء وكبار السن.

• الاهتمام بالأنشطة البيئية: منها على سبيل المثال وليس الحصر ، إقامة الحدائق وناقورات المياه للحفاظ على البيئة ومقاومة التلوث ومحاولة مراعاة البعد البيئي بشكل كبير في أنشطة الاعمال .

• الاهتمام بأنشطة مساعدة أفراد المجتمع في حالة الكوارث الطبيعية والاجتماعية كما هو الحال عند انهيار المنازل القديمة وحوادث الحرائق لاسيما المناطق العشوائية.

• إلتزام الشركة بدفع الضرائب وهذا يعد إسهاما اجتماعيا لمساعدة الدولة على تمويل الخدمات الاجتماعية والإنفاق على أنشطة البنية الأساسية.

هرم كارول Carroll's pyramid للمسؤولية الاجتماعية:

إحدى الطرق لفهم المسؤولية الاجتماعية للشركات هي

من خلال هرم كارول Carroll's pyramid ، والذي يقوم على تقديم مفهومًا اجتماعيًا لقبول المسؤولية من قبل الشركات. حيث يستعرض هرم كارول أربعة أنواع من المسؤولية الاجتماعية وهي الاقتصادية والقانونية والأخلاقية والمجتمعية (الخيرية).

يؤكد كارول أن الأربعة عناصر مهمة بشكل كبير، ويؤكد ان الشركات ستزداد أرباحها من خلال المسؤولية الاجتماعية وستتمكن من الحفاظ على وضع تنافسي قوي، والحفاظ على مستوى عال من كفاءة التشغيل.

المعايير التي تساعد في قياس المسؤولية الاجتماعية في قطاعات الاعمال المختلفة :

• مدي الالتزام بأخلاقيات العمل وظروف وشروط العمل وبالواجبات تجاه العاملين.

• مدى الالتزام تجاه حماية البيئة.

• مدى الاندماج في المجتمع والمساهمة في التنمية المجتمعية

• مدى الاستثمار في البحث والتطوير.

• مدى احترام حقوق الإنسان ومراعاة القواعد الأخلاقية.

كما أن هناك معايير دولية لقياس المسؤولية الاجتماعية للشركات تشمل المجالات التالية: الحقوق العمالية وممارسات العمل، حماية البيئة ، حقوق المستهلك، التنمية والمشاركة المجتمعية.

ونخلص من ذلك إلى أن للمسؤولية الاجتماعية جوانب اقتصادية، قانونية، إنسانية، أخلاقية وماهي الإ طريقة عمل للمؤسسات تضفي الصبغة الأخلاقية على نشاطاتها وتكون القضايا الاجتماعية والبيئية جزء من سياساتها وممارساتها.

مزايا ومنافع المسؤولية الاجتماعية التي تعود على قطاعات الاعمال المختلفة:

تشمل المسؤولية الاجتماعية العديد من المزايا والمنافع لقطاع الأعمال ومنها:

1- إن المسؤولية الاجتماعية للشركات تحقق التقارب بين الشركة والجمهور، إذ أن الجهود التي تبذلها الشركة لصالح مجموعة مستهدفة معينة في المجتمع كالمساهمين في الشركة مثلا، قد تضرر بمصالح مجموعات أخرى، والعكس فإن تحقيق التوازن الدائم بين جميع المصالح يعد جزءاً مهماً من المسؤولية الاجتماعية لتحقيق العدالة بين الفئات المختلفة.

2-إن المسؤولية الاجتماعية للشركات تعطي قيمة مضافة للمساهمين وتعلمهم أكثر ثقة في الشركة نتيجة للسياسات الاجتماعية التي تطبقها تجاه العاملين والمجتمع، إذ أنه كلما تحسنت نظرة الآخرين للشركة كان هذا أفضل بالنسبة لها.

3-إن زيادة التكاليف الناتجة عن القيام بالمسؤولية الاجتماعية والحفاظ على البيئة تستطيع الشركة تعويضها على المدى البعيد عبر مستوى ربحية يفوق تلك التكاليف بعد تمتعها بسمعة جيدة من خلال تطبيق المعايير البيئية والاجتماعية.

4-تحسين سمعة الشركة في الأوساط المالية والتجارية بين الموردين والعلاء وأفراد المجتمع.

5-تحسين الأداء المالي للشركة نتيجة زيادة الانتاجية وتحسين نوعية المنتج وبالتالي ارتفاع حجم المبيعات بسبب تقليل تكاليف التشغيل وولاء العاملين بالشركة، وتفضيل العملاء والمستهلكين لمنتجات وخدمات الشركة.

6-زيادة قدرة الشركة على الاحتفاظ بموظفيها الأكفاء مما يساعد في جذب المستثمرين.

دور قطاع التأمين ومسؤولياته الاجتماعيةتجاه المجتمع:

أسواق التأمين وإعادة التأمين العالمية:

تقع المسؤولية الاجتماعية للشركات (CSR) في صميم أولويات كبري شركات التأمين وإعادة

التأمين العالمية والتي تولي اهتمامًا خاصًا للنواحي الاجتماعية والبيئية والاقتصادية في استراتيجيتها التنموية.

كما تحرص هذه الشركات على تقديم برامج الدعم الاجتماعي على مستوي العالم وبالأخص في الدول الأكثر احتياجاً في إطار مسؤوليتها كلاعب اقتصادي محلي في بعض من هذه الدول من خلال اتخاذ مجموعة من الإجراءات لعدد من السنوات كجزء من التزامها الاجتماعي، بما يمتاشى مع سياسة المجموعة ومبادراتها وما يحقق أهدافها للوصول الى الفئات التي لا تصل اليها الخدمات التأمينية.

ويعني تحمل المسؤولية الاجتماعية في هذه الشركات أن تلتزم أولاً بعملائها وموظفيها والمجتمعات التي تتواجد بها.

إن تسهيل الإدماج المالي والتأميني للسكان في إطار أهداف الشمول المالي، ومكافحة الإعاقات والأمراض والفقر، وتعزيز التعليم للفقراء وغيرها، كلها مجالات التزام رئيسية لكبري شركات التأمين وإعادة التأمين حول العالم.

أيضا يعتبر تغير المناخ وعدم الاستقرار الاقتصادي من بين أكبر التحديات التي يهتم بها قطاع التأمين وإعادة التأمين العالمي للوصول إلى مستقبل أكثر استدامة ”.

ركائز المسؤولية الاجتماعية لشركات التأمين وإعادة التأمين العالمية:

1- الحوكمة والأخلاقيات المهنية: تهتم هذه الشركات بالتأمين على الشركات والمشاريع التي تراعي معايير الحوكمة والأخلاقيات في اعمالها، فلا يتم مثلا التأمين على تصنيع الأسلحة المحظورة أو على الكيانات التي لا تحترم حقوق الإنسان وعلى سبيل المثال لا الحصر عمل الأطفال، وغسل الأموال.

2-الاهتمام بحماية المناخ بالإضافة الى دعم التحول العالمي إلى اقتصاد منخفض الكربون والمشاركة في أنشطة الحد من ارتفاع متوسط درجة الحرارة العالمية إلى 2 درجة مئوية على النحو المحدد في اتفاقية باريس للمناخ.

3-العمل على انهاء جميع الاستثمارات المملوكة في شركات الفحم او أي أنشطة لها تأثير بيئي سلبي على المجتمع فضلاً عن الاهتمام بأنشطة الطاقة المتجددة.

4- تعزيز استراتيجيات الوصول الى الفئات التي لا تصل اليها الخدمات التأمينية من خلال الحلول الرقمية التي تسمح لأكبر عدد من الوصول إلى التأمين من خلال توفير التطبيقات على الهواتف الذكية وغيره من قنوات التوزيع الأكثر شيوعاً بالمجتمعات الفقيرة والنامية.

5- تقديم خدمات التأمين متناهي الصغر والتركيز على الأشخاص المستبعدين سابقاً من الخدمات المالية والعمل بالشراكة مع مؤسسات التمويل متناهي الصغر لتعويض المقترضين في حالة الوفاة أو العجز أو لحماية المزارعين من مخاطر الجفاف وغيره من المخاطر.

Change in Guard at SALAMA Signals New Growth Plans

Fahim Al Shehhi appointed as new CEO of UAE's largest Shari'ah compliant insurance provider

The Board of Directors of Islamic Arab Insurance Company ("SALAMA"), the UAE's largest Shari'ah compliant Takaful solutions provider, announced the appointment of Fahim Al Shehhi as its new Chief Executive Officer.

Fahim succeeds Parvaiz Siddiq, who recently stepped down as CEO, having been in the role since 2018 and with the company since 2016.

SALAMA is the largest Sharia'h compliant Takaful operator with 'AAA' level capital adequacy as per S&P.

Jassim Alseddqi, Chairman of SALAMA, said: "On behalf of the Board, I'm pleased to welcome Fahim to SALAMA. Fahim brings a strong track record of transforming businesses both at an operational and a strategic level which will help him drive SALAMA's next phase of growth as a modern, customer-focused company. Fahim in his new role will bring his cross-sector experience to work with the Board to accelerate SALAMA's growth strategy, driving core business profitability and investment income, while maintaining the company's market-leading position in the UAE Takaful market. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Parvaiz for his valuable contribution to the company."

Fahim Al Shehhi commented: "I have followed SALAMA's growth trajectory from the outside and have been impressed by the company's evolution as it has continued to lead the Islamic insurance sector with its customer-centric products and services that have won it many industry accolades over the years. I am excited to be part of the SALAMA team and look forward to working with the board, employees, customers and other partners to build on SALAMA's strengths and drive the company to even greater levels of success, firmly supported by strong business practices and technology-driven solutions."

Fahim joins SALAMA from Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA) where as VP-Business Development, he built commercial relationships and led the optimisa-



New appointment at SALAMA: *Fahim Al Shehhi, CEO of SALAMA*

tion of the capital investment process and performance. He is also a Board Member and Managing Director for Massar Solutions. Previously, Fahim held senior management roles within the Department of Economy in Abu Dhabi, Etisalat Group and also served as a non-executive Board member for Takaful Emarat Insurance.

In December 2020, SALAMA revealed its new brand identity to reflect the company's future strategic plans. SALAMA is also one of the few Takaful companies to return surplus cash to eligible policyholders, with the latest cash return announced in August 2020.

SALAMA Islamic Arab Insurance Company is one of the world's largest and longest-established Shari'ah compliant Takaful solutions providers listed on the Dubai Financial Market, with paid-up capital of Dh1.21bn. SALAMA has been a pioneer in the Takaful industry from its incorporation in 1979 to the present day.

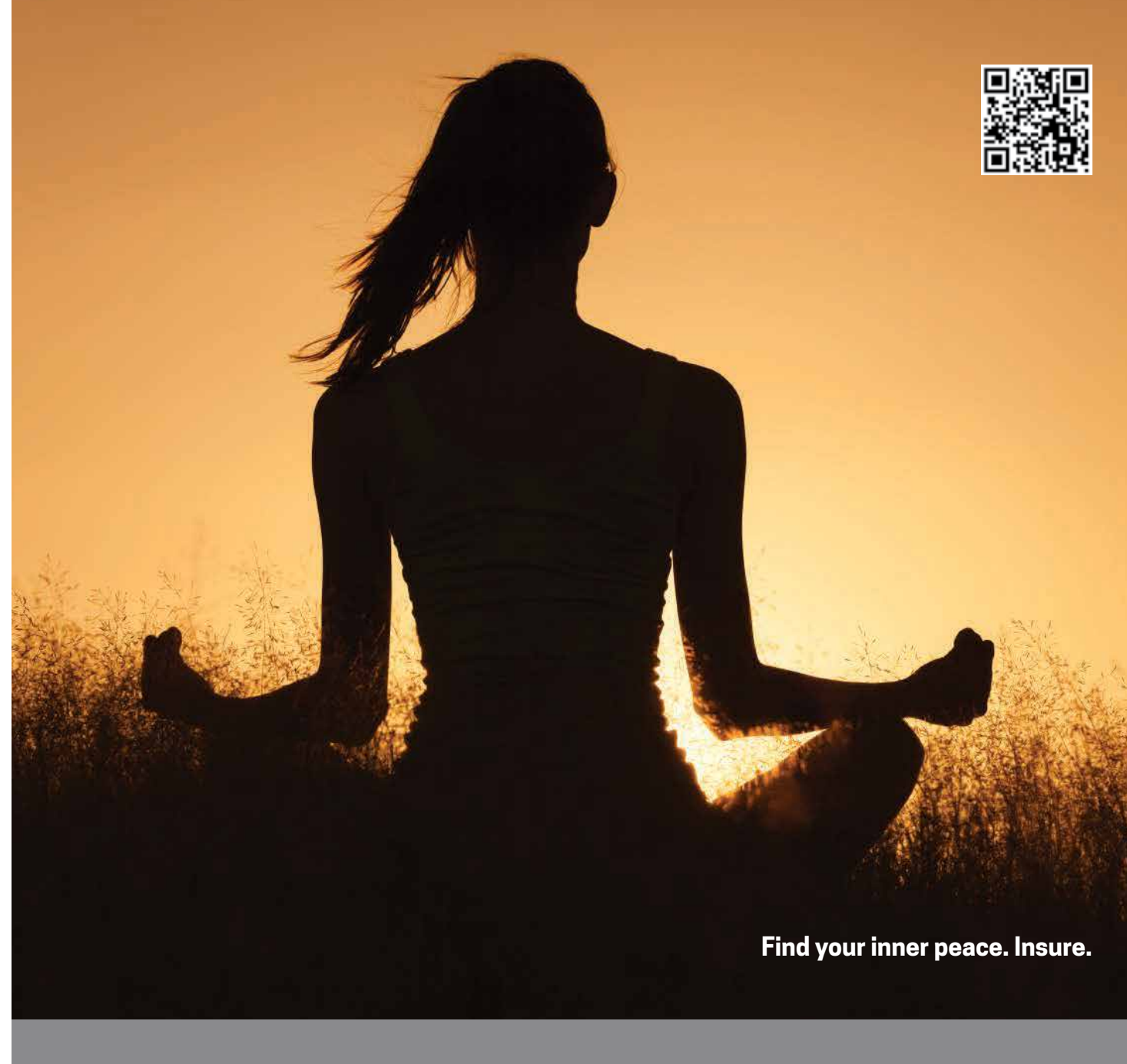
SALAMA's stability and success can be attributed to its customer-centric approach, keeping clients and partners at the heart of the business, and its commitment to its core values and principles. SALAMA continues

to design and develop solutions that meet the ever-changing demand of customers. Today, SALAMA is recognised for providing the most competitive and diverse range of Takaful solutions in the region.

SALAMA serves individual customers and institutions in the UAE and, through its extensive network of subsidiaries and associates in Egypt and Algeria.

As the UAE's leading Takaful company, SALAMA offers a comprehensive range of family, motor, general and health Takaful solutions. Due to its reputation for high-quality products and services and implementation of Takaful best practice, SALAMA won the 'Family Takaful Company of the Year-2015' award at the Middle East Insurance Awards, 'Best Family Takaful Operator ME - 2016' at the Islamic Banking and Finance Awards, 'Best Takaful Operator - 2019' by the Islamic Banking and Finance Awards as well as other accolades including the latest 'Takaful Company of the Year' award at MIAA 2020.

SALAMA continues to be the preferred Takaful partner by its partners and customers, remaining committed to 'Securing our future - together.'



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SALAMA Wins 'Takaful Specialist of the Year' Award 2021

SALAMA has been awarded Takaful Specialist of the Year at the MENA Insurance Review Awards (MENAIR) 2021, held virtually on 27 January 2021

Islamic Arab Insurance Company ("SALAMA"), the UAE's largest Shari'ah compliant Takaful solutions provider, recently announced that it has been awarded Takaful Specialist of the Year at the MENA Insurance Review Awards (MENAIR) 2021, held virtually on 27 January 2021.

The award recognizes SALAMA's market-leading Islamic insurance solutions and the high standards of customer service for which the company is known.

Commenting on the award, Jassim Alseddiqi, Chairman of SALAMA, said, "2020 was a pivotal year for SALAMA, not only in terms of the company's transition into a new era of providing personalized digital customer services, but also in terms of delivering a strong financial performance. Today, SALAMA is one of the few takaful companies in the region that is able to pay cash returns to both eligible policyholders and shareholders in the form of dividends."

SALAMA's recently appointed CEO, Fahim Al Shehhi, said: "I am delighted to be part of a company that is truly an exemplary leader in Islamic insurance. This award is testament to SALAMA's continued commitment to providing our customers with the best possible service in a rapidly evolving insurance landscape. In 2021, we will continue to provide personalized digital customer service and innovative takaful solutions, in line with our vision to make the benefits of Islamic insurance accessible to all."

Organized by Pageant Media, the MENAIR Awards recognize and reward MENA-based insurers, reinsurers, brokers and third-party administrators which have demonstrated exceptional customer service and innovative product development over the past 12 months.

The awards covered 20 categories with winners selected by a 10-member judging panel comprising senior executives from

across the regional insurance industry.

SALAMA stands as the largest Shari'ah compliant Islamic insurance operator with 'AAA' level capital adequacy as per S&P. SALAMA remains committed to serving partners and customers while enhancing shareholder returns in 2021 and beyond.

SALAMA Islamic Arab Insurance Company is one of the world's largest and longest-established Shari'ah compliant Takaful solutions providers listed on the Dubai Financial Market, with paid-up capital of Dh1.21bn. SALAMA has been a pioneer in the Takaful industry from its incorporation in 1979 to the present day.

SALAMA's stability and success can be attributed to its customer-centric approach, keeping clients and partners at the heart of the business, and its commitment to its core values and principles. SALAMA continues to design and develop solutions that meet the ever-changing demand of customers. Today, SALAMA is recognised for providing the most competitive and diverse range of Takaful solutions in the region.

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SALAMA continues to be the preferred Takaful partner by its partners and customers, remaining committed to 'Securing our future - together.'

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Anoud Technologies Named as a Global Top-Ten InsurTech Leader by ACORD and Alchemy Crew

Anoud Tech was listed in the Top Ten InsurTech Leaders in the category of Global Ecosystem-Building

Anoud Technologies LLC (Anoud Tech), a wholly-owned IT services subsidiary of QIC Group, the leading insurer in Qatar and the MENA region, has been named by ACORD and Alchemy Crew in the 2020 Top Ten Leaders with the greatest current and future ability to change the industry through InsurTech. ACORD is a non-profit organization in the insurance industry, while Alchemy Crew is a worldwide leader in InsurTech strategy. The "Top Ten InsurTech Leaders" was published on 15 December 2020 in Insider Engage, a digital hub of industry leaders within and outside of the insurance sector.

Anoud Tech was listed in the Top Ten InsurTech Leaders in the category of Global

Ecosystem-Building. This category recognizes achievements in the development of robust networks, interconnected systems, and global digitization which are critical elements to facilitate the development of the insurance industry. Anoud Tech is recognized for its best-in-class Insurance IT platform called Anoud+. It provides insurers an efficient, comprehensive way to manage all aspects of their insurance programs.

Commenting on this accomplishment, Salem Khalaf Al Mannai, QIC Group CEO said: "We are thrilled for Anoud Tech to be named as a Top Ten InsurTech Leader. It recognizes the success of QIC Group's business strategy of employing cutting-edge technologies in our insurance and reinsur-

ance operations, and of marketing these capabilities to the insurance industry at large."

Al Mannai added: "The ability to continuously to innovate and digitally transform our business model will be critical to maintaining our leadership position in the MENA region. IT will remain our focus going forward."

About Anoud Tech

Established by QIC in 2020 in the Qatar Financial Centre, Anoud Tech was the first fully incorporated Fintech Company in Qatar. Anoud Tech - through its close collaboration with Swiss Re, the world's largest reinsurance company, offers the Anoud+ Platform to insurers across the world.

Oman Re signs MoU with Ethio Re

Oman Re - the sole reinsurer operating in the Sultanate of Oman, represented by its Chairman - Dr. Juma Bin Ali Al Juma and Ethiopian Reinsurance Company, represented by its Chairman - Hailemariam Assefa Yeshitila jointly signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the

ceremonial event in Muscat on Mon, 25th Jan 2021.

Oman Re's leadership team welcomed the 10-member Ethio Re delegation comprising of their Board of Directors and Acting CEO.

Omar Re's Chairman - Dr. Juma Bin Ali Al Juma said "The core objective of this MoU

is to strengthen our areas of cooperation, strategic partnership and review mutual opportunities and challenges. Our subject matter experts also conducted workshops on Corporate Governance, Enterprise Risk Management and discussed the challenges affecting the reinsurance industry and reinsurers with the Ethio Re delegation."

SAMA To Develop the Saudi Insurance Sector

The Central Bank of Saudi Arabia (SAMA) has established a number of initiatives and structural reforms to align the Saudi insurance market with the Kingdom's "Vision 2030" objectives.

The insurance supervisory authority mainly aims to:

- *increase the insurance sector's contribution to GDP
- *stimulate savings among individuals
- create new job opportunities for citizens

and improve their skills

In order to achieve these objectives, SAMA intends to implement several procedures, controls, rules and instructions specific to the insurance sector.



Kuwait investing \$15.6 billion in infrastructure

What Does The Future Hold For Kuwait Infrastructure Sector?

Faster vaccine deployment and better cooperation for its distribution would boost confidence and strengthen the pickup but continued uncertainty risks further weakness

In 2020, even best laid plans were hijacked by COVID-19. And the uncertainty of the pandemic still hangs all around us. But the world is already moving forward. Expect the infrastructure sector to emerge from the crisis with renewed vigor, fulfilling a key role as a catalyst to sustainable economic recovery.

The year ahead will likely be characterized by growth, sustainability and resilience. And infrastructure will be its bedrock. Are you ready? Explore the trend insights and download the full report. To learn more about these trends, and their potential impact on your organization, we encourage you to contact us.

Faced with falling oil revenues as a result of the impact of Covid-19 and the OPEC production cuts, Kuwait adopted a conservative approach to government spending for the better part of 2020

Faced with falling oil revenues as a result of the impact of Covid-19 and the OPEC production cuts, Kuwait adopted a conservative approach to government spending for the better part of 2020.

Several large capital expenditure projects were put on hold as the government sought to reprioritize projects, leading to a slowdown in the infrastructure sector in Kuwait.

However, large-scale infrastructure projects are also a means of reviving economic growth, and the importance of private sector partners to help finance, develop and operate infrastructure assets has never been greater.

Infrastructure Trends

The successful listing of Shamal Al Zour Al Oula – Kuwait’s first IWPP – on Boursa Kuwait and the financial close of the Umm Al Hayman WWTP rejuvenated the Kuwait infrastructure market and the government is currently working with transaction advisors and bidders for various projects in the power, water, housing, entertainment, and transportation sectors.

Emerging trends in infrastructure 2021

Trend 1: Uncertainty creates planning complexity

Over the coming year, we expect infrastructure planners, operators, and developers looking for ways to enable a much more nimble and flexible approach to infrastructure planning, development, and delivery. Build back better is almost certain to result in build back different.

Trend 2: Cities undergo an identity crisis

Until very recently, cities acted as magnets, pulling people, capital and ideas inwards. How cities respond and adapt to the multipolarity catalyzed by COVID-19 remains to be seen. The new equilibrium is potentially a long way off.

Trend 3: Borders become real again

What will this mean for ports and airports? This trend will cover insights from a ports and airports perspective. Indeed, we believe this year will see port and airport operators start to consider art of the possible - building newer and better infrastructure, unlocking more value from bytes than bricks and contributing to a cleaner and greener environment.

Trend 4: Supply networks reform

The impact on shipping, transportation and trade infrastructure will be significant. This would mean the transport and logistics sector will have to reinvent themselves and newer business models will emerge. The 3-D printing potentially will get an even further boost to complement supply chain localization and increase the resilience.

Trend 5: A greener, fairer rebuild

Over the coming year, we expect to see the infrastructure sector become completely dominated by a focus on environmental, social and governance outcomes to ensure their actions are contributing to a fairer, more inclusive and more equitable world. We couldn't be happier, and the world will be a better place for it.

Trend 6: Resilience jumps up the agenda

Over the coming year, expect infrastructure owners, planners and regula-

tors to start asking difficult questions about the resilience of their assets in its broadest sense. Those without an existing resilience plan should expect a grilling.

Trend 7: Delivering a digital world in a secured fashion

Over the coming year, expect the focus on connectivity to sharpen significantly. Very soon, governments are going to start to recognize that they must address the growing deficits in their digital infrastructure. And they will be looking at enhancing their connectivity in order to drive growth in both their economies and their balance sheets.

Trend 8: Policy and regulatory reform become imperative

Indeed, infrastructure owners and governments currently have an unprecedented opportunity to rethink how they serve their stakeholders. We look forward to seeing and supporting the innovation and experimentation that will emerge over the coming year.

Trend 9: Governments look for partners

More than traditional financing partnerships, many governments are now striving to create partnerships that give them access to enhanced expertise and capabilities. Over the coming year, expect to see some governments start to reconsider the role the private sector plays not just in asset delivery, but also service delivery. In some cases, the partnership will be one of necessity as debt burdens from the pandemic push governments to find alternative models. In others, it will be driven by innovation and the desire to deliver more to stakeholders. Regardless, the outcome should be improved value for users and government alike.

Trend 10: New Finance floods into the market

For well-prepared governments with a strong and structured pipeline, the news couldn't be better. The ability to tap different sources of funding, including institutional capital and sustainable funds, over

top of local and regional banks and capital markets, should lead to a wealth of well-priced capital to compliment government finances. Over the coming year, expect to see investors pile into vehicles that provide sustainable inflation-protected long-term annuity returns, particularly as treasury rates remain low.

KPMG in Kuwait operates through its member firms KPMG Safi Al-Mutawa & Partners and KPMG Advisory W.L.L. providing a full range of audit, tax and advisory services to a portfolio of clients which include major corporations, government institutions, public sector agencies, and not-for profit organizations.

With over 200 employees and 8 partners based in Kuwait, KPMG forms part of a global organization of independent professional services firms operating in 146 countries and territories. With borders for people all but shut and international travel discouraged, migration fell to an all-time low. At the same time, supply chains became entangled (see Trend 4: Infrastructure supply networks evolve, for more on this), sending waves of disruption across the ports, airports and logistics sectors.

Interestingly, the impact on ports, airports and logistics companies has been uneven. The aviation and tourism sectors have been the hardest hit by the pandemic. Yet, while passenger volumes plummeted, some were able to benefit from the increasing demand for air cargo services, allowing a welcome opportunity to shore up revenues and better sweat assets.

As markets seek to define the 'new normal' in international travel, we expect to see governments and aviation authorities start to collaborate to harmonize regulation and standard operating procedures across countries. Much like the historic loss of trust experienced by the industry during the spate of hijackings in the 1970s and the period following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the industry will need to find ways to rebuild confidence in air travel. Ports also saw a drop in trade, reduced volumes and congestion as supply chain networks became disrupted. In many cases, support from port authorities, governments and policy makers has helped. But the sector is heavily dependent on end-user industries and trade so, depending on the prime commodities they handle and their location in the supply chain network, some ports may take two to three years to revert to pre-COVID levels.

Airport and port operators have recognized the need for technology and automation as a way to create greater resilience and stronger response mechanisms. Over the coming year, expect to see greater

investment into digital and smart ports, airport automation and the development of institutional mechanisms for improving collaboration between supply chain actors. Given the magnitude of the disruption and the critical role played by ports and airports in the global supply chain, we expect to see stakeholders (including governments, regulators, investors and service providers) start to place a greater focus on driving enhanced financial and operational resilience across their assets and networks.

Indeed, this year will see port and airport operators start to consider the art of the possible — looking for ways to unlock value from data, contributing to a greener and cleaner environment and planning for an eventual return to stable growth.

It wasn't just goods and manufacturing supply chains that experienced massive disruption as a result of the pandemic. So too did the world's infrastructure and construction companies. Supply of raw materials became disrupted. Equipment and labor became stuck behind borders. Project teams were either isolated on site or quarantined far away from their jobs.

In very short order, normalcy started to return to supply chains. Raw materials once again started to flow. Equipment began to move across borders (albeit often without their operators). Labor, however, remains constrained — workers are still largely confined by regional travel restrictions; operations and project teams are still often isolated.

Perhaps not surprisingly, infrastructure and construction supply chain managers remain deeply concerned that — any day now their suppliers may go back into lockdown and the flow of critical goods may be delayed. Others are looking past the current pandemic and realizing there are a wide range of concerning risks still hovering on the horizon.

Over the coming year, expect to see the pace of change in infrastructure and construction supply chains pick up as organizations invest in resiliency. We expect to see developers start to think more broadly about the factors that influence their supply strategies. In some cases, this will likely mean a strong shift towards re-shoring and nearshoring. And it will almost certainly mean that inventory levels will rise considerably.

The challenges that the pandemic delivered to society are obvious. But there have also been a few silver linings: people have seen how quality of life can be improved by cleaner air and streets reclaimed from the roar and congestion of cars; and inequalities and economic im-

balances have been brought to the public consciousness. Not surprisingly, society is now calling for a greener, fairer and more sustainable rebuild of the world economy. They want this experience to have led to something positive. This new reality is being seen as a clean slate; an opportunity for a new form of equitable and sustainable growth. On the environmental side of the ESG equation, at least, governments clearly agree. And many have been making significant policy announcements to support that agenda. More than 22 regions and 450 cities have signed up to the UN's Race to Zero campaign, aiming for zero emissions by 2050. Major economies are also making commitments: Japan intends to achieve net zero by 2050; China by 2060. The EU's Green Deal signals the block's intention to also reach the goal by 2050. President Biden's early promise to spend up to US\$2 trillion on green infrastructure and energy is also encouraging.

The economics underpinning the market have also rapidly changed. Recent estimates suggest that — in countries that represent two-thirds of the population renewable energy is now the cheapest form of power. We have entered an era of hyperconnectivity. Those businesses unable to exploit the new digital economy will quickly fall behind. And the pressure on governments is rising to provide, secure and utilize the foundations for a hyperconnected world.

Connectivity technologies like 5G and Cloud will also be central to driving innovation and value in infrastructure.

For smart cities and venues, for example, hyperconnected infrastructure can enable space and energy to be fully optimized, smart waste and water management to be implemented, and connected mobility solutions to be integrated. It can help utilities secure their smart grids and deploy sustainable energy and dynamic asset management systems. It is critical to hastening the early development of fully autonomous vehicles.

Over the coming year, expect the focus on connectivity to sharpen significantly. Very soon, governments are going to start to recognize that they must address the growing deficits in their digital infrastructure. And they will be looking at enhancing their connectivity (and the cyber security of their assets) in order to drive growth in both their economies and their balance sheets. Governments increasingly see that the private sector can be a trusted delivery partner. And, as a result, a range of new opportunities for private sector participation are emerging. Governments and citizens should be delighted.



مخاوفك نحن نهتم بها
Leave your worries to us.

Secretary-General Pololikashvili nominated to lead UNWTO

The Executive Council of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has expressed its continued support for Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. Meeting in Madrid, its members nominated him to continue leading the United Nations specialized agency for four more years.

At the end of the 113th session of the Executive Council, held as a hybrid event in Spanish capital, Members voted in person and in secret for their choice of leader for 2022-2025. Incumbent Pololikashvili won 76% of the votes in a process where the Kingdom of Bahrain also put forward a candidate for the position, Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa. Her Excellency congratulated Pololikashvili on his win and the Government of Bahrain expressed its support for UNWTO.

Pololikashvili had based his campaign for re-election both on the progressive institutional and policy reforms undertaken during his first term, and on his clear leadership of global tourism throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Council's recommendation will be carried forward to the 24th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly, due to be held in Marrakesh, Morocco, towards the end of the year.

Hana Al Rostamani is the first woman CEO at UAE's biggest lender

First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) has appointed Hana Al Rostamani as the first woman group chief executive officer of the UAE's biggest lender by assets.

Al Rostamani, who is currently the deputy group CEO, will replace André Sayegh, Sheikh Tahnoon Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, FAB chairman, announced in a bourse filing to the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX).

Sayegh, whose appointment was announced in February last year, will be retiring next month after 21 years with the bank.

Hana has a Master's degree in information management from George Washington University in the US and has been in the field of banking and financial services for more than 20 years. She has served as an independent director in Emirates Integrated Telecommunication Company (Du) and was vice chairperson of the Emirates Institute for Banking and Financial Services.

She has been responsible for leading the consumer bank vision towards customer centricity and digitisation.

"FAB has always been an organisation that champions diversity and the appointment of our first female group CEO to

lead our company into the future is truly something to value," Al Nahyan said.

MEA new rules as of 11 January 2021

Reference to the circular issued by the Directorate General of the Lebanese Civil Aviation on 1/6/2021, regarding procedures related to passengers arriving to Lebanon effective January 11, 2021 in light of the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, Middle East Airlines, announces that the following procedures shall be applied as of January 11th, 2021 to all Passengers arriving to Lebanon as final destination:

Passengers must hold PCR negative test results from one of the certified laboratories by local authorities at point of departure and show it at MEA check in counters.

- Negative test result validity must not exceed 96 hours between the test result and the date of arrival to Lebanon.

- Passengers who do not carry a negative PCR test result are not allowed to board MEA flights.

- Passengers must complete the medical form issued by the Ministry of Public Health of Lebanon and this form is available through this link <https://arcg.is/oGaDnG>

- Passengers shall undergo PCR test upon arrival at Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport-Beirut.

- Passengers shall have prepaid hotel booking for 48 hrs. in one of the hotels designated by Lebanese Ministry of Tourism with discounted rates (listed below) and hotel buses will transport passengers to their hotels.

- Passengers shall quarantine at hotels for 48 hrs. until they are informed of test results that were performed upon arrival at the airport.

- Passengers with negative PCR result will continue quarantine at their residence for another 5 days. On day seven they must perform another PCR test at their own expenses. Passengers with positive result shall follow Ministry of Public Health instructions.

Exemptions:

- Diplomats and their families, officials, official delegations, officers and members of the UNIFIL are exempted from the hotel quarantine.

- Passengers who have been vaccinated by Covid-19 vaccine with a medical report certifying that, are exempted from the hotel quarantine and must perform a PCR test upon arrival at the airport.

- Passengers who have left and returned to Lebanon within one week (who travelled during one day of the week and returned on same day during the follow-

ing week) are not required to do PCR test at their point of departure but must perform a PCR test at the airport upon their arrival to Lebanon and must home quarantine for one week from their date of arrival.

- Cabin crew arriving to Lebanon for a period of no more than 48 hours are exempted from doing PCR test upon arrival at the airport, and they shall remain quarantined in one of the designated hotels during their stay in Lebanon.

Designated hotels:

1. All passengers arriving to Lebanon shall have a prepaid hotel booking for 48 hours in one of the following hotels designated by the Ministry of Tourism in Lebanon with discounted rates:

- Radisson Blu Martinez: +961 3 636032 or +961 3 624268 or Whatsapp: +961 3 610168

- Radisson Blu Verdun: +961 81 615196 - Reservations.verdun@radissonblu.com

- Golden Tulip Hotels- Hamra: +961 1 347555 – www.midtownbeirut.com

- Parisian Hotel: +961 70 007366 - www.theParisianplaza.com

- Royal Tulip Achrafieh: +961 76 666314 - www.royaltulipachrafieh.com

- Plaza Hotel: +961 3 928904 or +961 1 755777

- Gefinor Rotana – Beirut: +961 3 342238 - Georges.nassar@rotana.com or Res.gefinor@rotana.com

- Arjaan by Rotana: +961 71 114734 - Christine.maalouf@rotana.com

- Casa D'or – Hotel: +961 1 746400/15/6 - www.casadorhotel.com

- Lancaster Hotels and Suites: +961 1 791000 or Whatsapp: +961 70 380000 - www.lancaster.com.lb

- Crowne Plaza Hamra: +961 1 734100 +961 1 111918 - reservation.cpbeirut@ihg.cpm or reception.cpbeirut@ihg.cpm

- Imperial Suites: +961 76 722661 - reservations@lahoyahotels.com

- Warwick Palm Beach Hotel: +961 3 698781 celamine@warwickhotels.com or reservation.palmbeach@warwickhotels.com

- Smallville Hotel: +961 76 666314 - reservations@thesmallville.com

- Le Royal Hotel- Beirut: Whatsapp: +961 81 796337 : reservation-bey@leroyal.com

- Hilton Beirut Habtoor Grand: +961 1 516060 Whatsapp: +961 3 565790 beyhg.res@hilton.com or faten.khoury@hilton.com

- Kanaan Group Hotel: +961 70 177273 +961 08 376283 - www.kanaanhotel.com

- Jieh Marina Resort Hotel: +961 3 167776 or Whatsapp: +961 07 996196

chalet@jiehmarinahotel.com

Aldar launches the "Aldar Scale Up Programme" for Proptech startups

Aldar Properties ('Aldar') announced the launch of its corporate innovation programme, Aldar Scale Up, in partnership with startAD, the Abu Dhabi-based global accelerator at NYU Abu Dhabi and powered by its partner Tamkeen. The virtual market access will provide a gateway to tangible growth opportunities, build strong networks, and validate global PropTech startups providing the latest cutting-edge real estate technology to enter and grow in the UAE market through pilot projects with Aldar and other leading industry players in the region.

The inaugural edition of the programme will run virtually over a four-month period, at the end of which ten startups will have the opportunity to pitch to a selection committee and up to five startups will be awarded pilot projects with Aldar. Startups will provide innovative and sustainable solutions in the real estate sector such as effective energy management, the development of smart cities, and the protection of biodiverse ecosystems. Opportunities to secure pilot projects with other UAE companies will be available for entrepreneurial ventures during the pitching process.

Hub71, Abu Dhabi's global tech ecosystem, will also be joining the programme selection committee. PropTech startups selected for Aldar Scale Up will automatically be shortlisted for Hub71's Incentive Program, which offers more than \$400,000 worth of equity-free subsidies including up to 100 per cent free housing, health insurance and WeWork x Hub71 office space for up to three years. By joining Hub71, startups will become part of a growing community of entrepreneurs which include more than 75 startups and over 30 partners, further enabling better access to market capital, talent, and the business and regulatory environment.

Commenting on the Aldar Scale Up Programme, Maan Al Awlaqi, Executive Director, Strategy and Transformation, Aldar Properties, said: "Fostering a culture of innovation internally at every level of our business helps us create intellectual and practical progress at Aldar towards a better customer experience and lifestyle. This encompasses both product ideation and enhancements and further leads to improvement in processes and UX experiences. The MENA region is gaining significant strides in cultivating a startup culture and harnessing homegrown talent, with a record \$1 billion dollars invested in start-

ups in 2020. Total funding is up 13% from 2019 while later stage deals increased by 52%, according to Magnitt's 2021 Venture Investment Report. This demonstrates the increase in demand for such deals, and the importance of the programme we are launching today. The PropTech sector seems to be finally gaining steam globally and is revolutionising the landscape. As this narrative evolves, it is important that companies remain agile by tapping into emerging trends and investing time and resources in property technology.

The Aldar Scale Up Programme is a good fit to our innovation lens as it provides a unique platform which connects promising PropTech startups with companies and equips them with the tools to scale their businesses and grow in Abu Dhabi. We look forward to reviewing the submissions for the programme and seeing what the applicants have to offer."

Speaking on the announcement of the programme, Research Professor of Engineering, Vice Provost for Entrepreneurship at NYUAD, and Managing Director of startAD, Ramesh Jagannathan, said: "Infrastructure and construction programmes are known to have a direct link to economic growth, job creation, and reduction of poverty. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, in order to keep pace with global GDP growth, the construction sector has to spend close to \$57 trillion by 2030. That is more than 60% of what has been spent in the last two decades. Interestingly, 40% of this spend could be recouped through improved productivity by digitalization, and embracing currently available technologies.

AM Best Webinar to Focus on Captive Rating Approach and GCC Market Trends for Captive Insurers

AM Best will host a complimentary webinar on Tuesday, 19 January 2021, at 14:00 (GST) on captive insurance trends in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. Captives are an important risk management tool for their owners, providing them with the flexibility to navigate the insurance and reinsurance underwriting cycles and maintain access to the risk cover they require on an ongoing basis. Recent market and regulatory changes have meant that captives are becoming increasingly appealing to regional corporates.

This event brings together two global captive market leaders to highlight the benefits of captives from an owner's perspective, as well as to discuss the participants' experiences in operating within the GCC markets. Marsh, as the world's largest captive manager, will present de-

velopments on the GCC captive markets.

AM Best is a global leader in the rating of alternative risk transfer entities, covering more than 200 such vehicles, including single-parent and group captives, risk retention groups, and will discuss the main areas of analysing a captive.

The webinar will also reflect on the reasons for and benefits of establishing a captive's, recent developments in the GCC captive market, and AM Best's analytical approach to rating captives.

Vasilis Katsipis, general manager, market development, AM Best will moderate the sessions, which include presentations and panel discussions by Ronny Vellekoop, senior executive officer, Marsh Captive Solutions, Tim Tovell, group insurance manager, DP World and Ghislain Le Cam, director, analytics, AM Best.

To register for joining this important seminar, please go to <http://www.ambest.com/webinars/GCC21> Attendees can submit advance questions during registration or by emailing webinars@ambest.com. Webinar playback will be available to registered viewers shortly after the event.

AM Best Announces NED Appointment to Boards of A.M. Best Europe Rating Services Ltd., and A.M. Best (EU) Rating Services, B.V.

AM Best has appointed Steve Wilson as an independent Non-Executive Director to the Boards of its Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region subsidiary, A.M. Best Europe Rating Services Ltd. (AMBERS), and its EU-based subsidiary, A.M. Best (EU) Rating Services B.V. (AMBEU). His appointment is with effect from 1 January 2021.

Commenting on the appointment, Matthew C. Mosher, President & CEO, AM Best Rating Services and Chairman of AMBERS, said: "The appointment of Wilson as a Non-Executive Director to the Board of AMBERS and AMBEU represents another important step in the development and governance of our businesses across the EMEA region and within the EU. Wilson has extensive experience of the insurance industry and has interacted extensively with boards, investment analysts, rating agencies, regulators and auditors with a focus on actuarial and risk governance."

Wilson, a qualified actuary, has over 30 years' experience in the insurance industry. In addition to his actuarial roles, his experience includes risk management and general management. He has worked internationally for over 15 years in roles that included Group Chief Actuary for Zurich, Head of Zurich's Global Specialty Product practice and Global Chief Risk Officer of Zurich's general insurance businesses.



Helping the underprivileged: Prime Minister Saad Hariri meets Prime Minister Hassan Diab

Hariri calls for respect of COVID measures, for helping the underprivileged

The Press Office of Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri issued the following: On top of all the obstacles and tensions that prevent the birth of the government, the Corona pandemic remains a national, moral and humanitarian issue that does not tolerate outbidding, neglect, and socio-economic justifications, regardless of their severity.

Lebanon is on the verge of reaching first position in COVID-19 cases, which is extremely dangerous and concerns the Lebanese, the residents and the displaced without exception. This calls for a deep awareness of the health repercussions in case the ongoing violations and procedures that do not rise to the level of the danger persist.

I call today on all the Lebanese, especially our beloved ones in the popular regions and neighborhoods, to stay home and to stop all forms of socializing and activities. We are facing a pandemic that does not have mercy on anyone, old or young, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, citizen or resident, Muslim or Christian.

There is certainly a responsibility on the state and its duty is to provide the necessities, especially for the poor, those

with limited income and the daily-paid workers who are trying hard to secure their daily subsistence. Consequently, there is an ethical responsibility for the prosperous people in all sects, regions, parties and economic sectors, to show solidarity and cooperate to help the deprived people and reduce the deprivation and hunger of the citizens. However, the major responsibility falls on the Lebanese and residents collectively, starting from our homes, our environments, our parties, our mosques and our churches, the responsibility to strictly adhere to the obligations of prevention, safety and discipline.

The Lebanese medical and health staff, in public and private hospitals, the Red Cross, the civil defense, the laboratories, pharmacies, clinics and dispensaries, constitute the first line of defense for the safety of people and combating the pandemic, but the national and moral duty calls on us, citizens and officials, to provide protection and safety requirements to this heroic team to be able to carry out its role. In this regard, we will start with ourselves, by calling on all partisans and supporters of the Future Movement and of martyr Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in the regions, to take this call seriously and to abide by it, and to refrain from organizing any activities for the approaching

commemoration of the assassination of the martyr Prime Minister and his companions, including gathering in front of his grave or holding meetings.

The Corona pandemic has taken the lives of friends, loved ones and relatives, and entered our homes without permission to sow terror and anxiety. It reaps citizens one by one, but neglect will open for it the gates of tragedy.

God Almighty says in His Holy Quran: "You shall spend in the cause of GOD; do not throw yourselves with your own hands into destruction. You shall be charitable; GOD loves the charitable."

Strong Lebanon renews call on Hariri to communicate with President

The "Strong Lebanon" parliamentary bloc hoped, in a statement following its periodic meeting headed by MP Gebran Bassil, that "the time has come and conditions are complete to form the long-awaited government," calling upon PM-designate Saad Hariri to end the stalemate and communicate with the President of the Republic to form the promised reform government in accordance with the principles of the Charter and the rules of the constitution.

Conferees called on the bloc to "keep abreast of the changes taking place in

the Middle East and the world in a way that preserves Lebanon, its unity and its stability," noting that "the Lebanese must formulate unified national positions from the major entitlements to ensure that the country is spared any turmoil as a result of divisions." They stressed "the necessity of giving priority to reform and anti-corruption laws, and the need to quickly pass them at the House of Representatives, especially the laws related to the funds and deposits of the Lebanese people and the laws for controlling transfers abroad (capital control), the recovery of money transferred and smuggled abroad, the recovery of looted funds, and the disclosure of the accounts and properties of officials and public servants."

Abdel Samad discusses with Fischbach. official media cooperation

Discussions focused on the possibilities of cooperation between the Ministry of Information and Facebook in the media and awareness campaigns on social media networks, mainly through the Ministry's two electronic pages on COVID-19.

President signs three parliament-approved laws: Regulating COVID vaccine use

President of the Republic, General Michel Aoun, signed the three laws that were approved by the Parliament in yesterday's session:

- Law No. 211 related to regulating the emerging use of medicinal products to combat the "COVID-19"

- Law No. 212 relating to the extension of time limits

- Law No. 213 aiming at authorizing the collection of revenues as in the past and the disbursement of expenditures from the first of February 2021 until the issuance of the 2021 budget, on the basis of the twelfth rule. As a result of the President's signature, these laws become effective and valid for publication in the Official Gazette, and shall come into force upon publication. --{Presidency Press Office}

Geagea: To direct the remaining reserves of the Central Bank exclusively to poor families

Head of the Lebanese Forces Party, Samir Geagea, called on the President of the Republic, Caretaker Ministers and Central Bank Governor to save the remaining funds of the depositors' money for the needy families in the country.

Geagea pointed out that "instead of the subsidy going to needy families, we see the bulk of it being smuggled into Syria, or as an excuse for some traders or importers, or a waste for those who do not need support."

"In addition to all the losses that the current ruling group has inflicted on the Lebanese people over the past four years, there is an unrelenting crime that continues to happen until now against the remaining Lebanese deposits," he concluded.

FPM: Corona is an incentive to accelerate government formation

The "Free Patriotic Movement" political body held its periodic meeting, chaired by its Chief, MP Gebran Bassil, following which an issued statement indicated that "Corona crisis should be a catalyst to accelerate the formation of the government, and it should motivate the caretaker government to carry out its duties, especially the ministers who interpret the resignation as a disclaimer of responsibility and abandonment of work." The FPM polit-bureau statement confirmed that "the constitution holds the caretaker government responsible for inaction, which, in light of these difficult health and financial conditions, leads to harm and even danger to citizens, resulting

in a legal and moral responsibility on part of the inactive minister towards citizens."

Moreover, the statement called on the Ministry of Public Health and the Coronavirus Committee to "adopt a decision banning travel to Lebanon from countries where the mutated Corona strains appear."

Conferees expressed their concern about the increase in the number of people infected with Coronavirus and the number of deaths, in light of the limited capabilities of both the state and the private sector.

Enemy gunboat infiltrates into territorial waters off Ras Naqoura

A gunboat belonging to the Israeli enemy violated, the Lebanese territorial waters off Ras Naqoura, and infiltrated some 203 meters into the sea, a communiqué by the Lebanese army indicated lately. Violations are a matter of coordination between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the UNIFIL.

Lebanon submits complaint to Security Council to release kidnapped shepherd immediately

After the Israeli enemy kidnapped Lebanese shepherd, Hassan Zahra, from Mazraat Bastara lately, Lebanon submitted a complaint to the Security Council, Beirut time, through Lebanon's permanent representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Amal Mudallali, regarding the repeated Israeli violations against Lebanon's sovereignty.

Ambassador Mudallali raised the complaint to both Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, and Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations and President of the Security Council, Ambassador Tarek Ladeb.

Berri welcomes UK Chargé d'Affaires, receives cable from Iraq's Al-Kazemi

House Speaker, Nabih Berri, received at his Ain El Tineh residence, UK Chargé d'Affaires in Lebanon, Martin Longden, with whom he discussed the general situation and the bilateral relations between Lebanon and the UK.

Later, Speaker Berri met with Vice Head of the Islamic Supreme Shiite Council, Sheikh Ali Khatib.

Berri received head of the State Shura Council, Judge Fadi Elias, and the Government Commissioner to the Council, Judge Feryal Dalloul, where they discussed a draft law on the independence of the judicial authority. Berri received a cable from Iraqi Prime Minister, Mustafa Al-Kazemi, congratulating him on the New Year and the holy holidays.

China's Automotive Industry Intensifies Electrification Efforts, Sustainability a Key Focus

Leading and emerging Chinese autotech innovators in electrification revealed; New energy vehicle affordability remains a key value proposition

Agreement between Saudi Aramco Development Company, a subsidiary of Aramco, and Google Cloud paves way for rollout of high-performance, low-latency cloud services

China rises to fourth globally in market share of electric cars, KPMG report finds. New regulations, expanded autonomous vehicle testing across country help drive growth.

Increased consumer demand for sustainable vehicle options and policy evolutions have driven China's automotive industry participants to intensify their efforts on electrification, according to KPMG's latest research report. As part of the fourth KPMG China Leading Autotech 50 initiative, a list of China's leading and emerging autotech innovators in electrification has been released today along with the report.

This report on electrification, titled *Sinocharged: The bright future of China's electric vehicle market*, highlights how the new energy vehicle (NEV) market in China has changed over the past year and summarises trends in three major areas of electrification, namely original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), the battery value chain and electric vehicle (EV) charging. The report analysis integrates observations from KPMG partners involved in the auto industry, as well as input from in-depth interviews with senior management of some of China's most innovative automotive start-up companies.

In 2020, China saw a dramatic shift within the NEV market, from being historically supply and policy driven to revealing more characteristics of a demand-driven marketplace, as more consumers put emphasis on an environmentally friendly lifestyle and demand sustainable vehicle options. In addition, there have been changes in the stance by regulators. For instance, China pledged to become carbon-neutral by 2060, partly via the electrification of

transportation.

Norbert Meyring, Partner, Head of Automotive Sector at KPMG China, says: "We are in the midst of an auto industry evolution fusing electrification, mobility, service innovation and connectivity. Not only are the new generation of start-up OEMs successfully selling NEVs, but traditional OEMs are acting on their commitments to launch their own NEV products. As a result, China and major automotive nations are witnessing the beginning of a vibrant NEV market."

China's NEV market has been dominated by domestic manufacturers who have had more than a combined 80 percent market share in recent years, while traditional foreign OEMs have taken a more conservative pace towards electrification. However, given the government support, infrastructure improvements and closing production cost gap between NEV and internal combustion engine (ICE), foreign OEMs are keen to expand their NEV product offering. Going forwards, they are expected to gain market share in the NEV segment via their Chinese joint ventures.

The overall combined vehicle market size will likely not grow fast enough to match the sales targets of all the OEMs, so market consolidation is inevitable. "Market leadership changes will be ongoing, but since traditional OEMs are now more serious about electrification, competition will become more intense both locally and globally," says Gary Xu, Partner, Mergers and Acquisitions, KPMG China.

NEV affordability remains a key value proposition, and since the battery is the major cost item for NEVs, OEMs that can develop or source better-quality batteries would have an edge versus their peers. China has been securing access to the major material resources to make NEV batteries and is a forerunner in the materials processing industry. Despite the entry of some

global battery suppliers, it is unlikely that foreign suppliers can gain more share in future since more global OEMs are tying up with local suppliers. "Leading Chinese NEV battery suppliers, along with other major Asia suppliers in Japan and Korea, will continue to be the leaders in the global supply chain considering their strong market position," says Miguel Montoya, Partner, Deal Advisory, KPMG China. In terms of challenges, insufficient charging infrastructure has always been a key setback in consumers' desire to switch to NEVs. To catch up with the growth of NEV ownership in the future, the growth pace of charging pile counts will only speed up given the current insufficiency. This creates opportunities backed by the Chinese government's support for charging network expansion.

While major operators have begun to collaborate to improve pile availability information, the benefits of a connected charging pile network go beyond that. Besides collecting vehicle charging data and electricity usage data, a smart connected charging pile network can also provide NEV usage data such as driving and charging habits. The big data obtained from the NEV fleet in occasions like charging can also reveal valuable details of the lifestyles of NEV owners.

"Charging pile utilization is usually low and efficiency/profitability cannot be enhanced by only analyzing simple charging data. But if combined with data on NEVs' conditions and usage patterns, more customized value-added services such as car care and shopping can be offered to NEV owners, thus making the charging network a more valuable habitat," comments Phil Yu, Partner, Management Consulting, KPMG China.

China has been the world's largest NEV market by sales volume since 2015 and is expected to maintain that position for years to come. To address challenges from



Electric car with open doors: China rises to fourth globally in market share of electric cars

industry pioneers like Tesla and other NEV start-ups, many traditional domestic OEMs have adopted a new business model to help foster new thinking or decision processes while also allowing more possible collaborations with external parties. Luther Kang, Partner, Automotive Strategy, KPMG China, also says: "Nowadays traditional domestic OEMs are launching their latest NEV products under separate brands, in some cases under a stand-alone business entity. OEMs are taking a similar approach with their new subsidiaries. Standalone identities simplify strategic investments by and cooperation with external parties."

Looking ahead, Chinese and global NEV demand and fleet size will continue to grow rapidly due to government support, OEMs' increasing commitments and further NEV adoption by car owners, according to the report. The wider use of NEVs will also create a new ecosystem from the traditional ICE value chain, in areas such as NEV-specific components, charging and peripheral services, and other big data applications, and creates new business opportunities for young auto tech companies. "They are participating in the NEV industry at the right time and in the right place. As the industry is still evolving, there are still opportunities for technology disruptors for both products and services," Meyring concludes.

China leapt to fourth globally in market share of electric cars, up seven places from last year, a KPMG report has found.

The country's new ranking behind Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands came in the second annual Autonomous Vehicles Readiness Index, which aims to provide an understanding of various countries' preparedness and openness to AV technology.

Huu-Hoi Tran, Partner, Automotive, KPMG China, says: "Autonomous driving in China will come gradually on certain routes, streets and highways. That boosts confidence in steadily developing autonomous driving functions, from easier routes to more complex situations, including AVs operating in public alongside conventional cars."

Tran cites new regulations and a push to expand AV testing across the country as helping drive growth in 2018. Given its sizeable market and the introduction of new technology such as 5G, China has huge potential to be one of the world's most important AV markets, Tran adds.

China also placed fourth globally in electric vehicle charging stations, behind the Netherlands, Norway and South Korea. The country doubled its charging infrastructure in the past year, from 2.5 stations per 100 kilometres of roadway to 5.7.

Further, China ranked fifth in the world in government-funded autonomous vehicle

pilots, marking a significant jump from last year's showing of 16th. In another encouraging sign, China led all countries in consumer adoption of online ride-hailing apps.

Philip Ng, Partner and Head of Technology, KPMG China, says: "Autotech continues to attract attention from VC investors in China – from autonomous vehicles to ride sharing. VC investors are keenly interested in new and competitive options such as electric cars, battery power and charging infrastructure."

KPMG will release the complete China Leading Autotech 50 list around mid-2021. The complete list will cover four major areas, namely electrification, mobility, service innovation, and connectivity.

KPMG member firms and their affiliates operating in mainland China, Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR are collectively referred to as "KPMG China." KPMG China is based in 27 offices across 25 cities with around 12,000 partners and staff in Beijing, Changsha, Chengdu, Chongqing, Foshan, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Haikou, Hangzhou, Hefei, Jinan, Nanjing, Ningbo, Qingdao, Shanghai, Shenyang, Shenzhen, Suzhou, Tianjin, Wuhan, Xiamen, Xi'an, Zhengzhou, Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR. Working collaboratively across all these offices, KPMG China can deploy experienced professionals efficiently, wherever our clients are located.

Exhibition	Dates	Venue	Organizer	Contact
Iraq Oil and Gas Show	2-3 March 2020	Babylon Hotel, Baghdad	Ministry of Oil Announces	events@frontier-exchange.com
STEP 2020	11 – 12, February 2020	Dubai, UAE	Step Group	media@stepgroup.co
The 4th annual Dubai World Insurance Congress (DWIC)	26 – 27, February 2020	Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Dubai	lobal Reinsurance, in partnership with Dubai Int'l Financial Center	adam.jordan@nqsm.com
Iraq Oil and Gas Show	2-3 March 2020	Babylon Hotel, Baghdad	Ministry of Oil Announces	events@frontier-exchange.com
Middle East Healthcare Financing Summit	9-10 March, 2020	Rosewood Hotel, Abu Dhabi	Maarefah	info@mehcfs.com
9th Middle East Business & IT Resilience Summit	12th March 2020	Dubai, UAE	N/A	summit@bcm-me.ae
Rendez-vous des Carthage	22-24 March, 2020	Laico Tunis Hotel	Tunis Re & FTUSA	https://www.rdv-carthage.com/
Rendez-vous de Casablanca de l'Assurance	01-02 April, 2020	Hayatt Regency Hotel	Federation Marocaine Des Societes D'Assurances et Reassurance	info@mehcfs.com information@rdvdelassurance.ma
Iraq Oil and Gas Show	2-3 March 2020	Babylon Hotel, Baghdad	Ministry of Oil Announces	events@frontier-exchange.com
STEP 2020	11 – 12, February 2020	Dubai, UAE	Step Group	media@stepgroup.co
The 4th annual Dubai World Insurance Congress (DWIC)	26 – 27, February 2020	Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Dubai	Global Reinsurance, in partnership with Dubai Int'l Financial Center	adam.jordan@nqsm.com
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2021 Audi SQ5 Sportback (European model shown)

2021 AUDI Q5 SPORTBACK AND SQ5 SPORTBACK

AUDI RECENTLY ANNOUNCED TWO all-new variants for its best-selling, recently refreshed Audi Q5 model line, the 2021 Q5 Sportback and SQ5 Sportback. The arrival of these new variants brings customers expressive coupe design to an SUV with a high level of everyday usability. The Sportback variants maintain benchmark-setting connectivity services, including new MIB 3 infotainment hardware, Audi virtual cockpit fully digital instrument cluster, and head-up display.

Powerful presence

Audi Q5 Sportback variants exude a captivating presence similar to the brand's

other Sportback models, the A5 Sportback, A7, and fully electric e-tron Sportback.

The Sportback offers customers an elegant, sloping roofline for those looking for expressive design and sportier stance while maintaining a high-level of everyday usability.

Further differentiating the Sportback from the SUV, standard equipment includes:

- 19-inch 5-double arm design wheels
- Deletion of roof rails
- S line exterior
- Panoramic sunroof
- Sport front seats

Standard LED headlights with distinctive daytime running light signature or available Matrix-design LED headlights.

Audi SQ5 Sportback models offer next-generation OLED lighting technology as part of the Prestige trim. The OLED tail-light is split into three tiles of six segments each, allowing for bright and efficient light

designs with unique signatures.

Inside, Sportback models offer 24.7 cubic feet of cargo capacity with the seats up and 51.9 cubic feet of cargo capacity with the seats folded which further emphasize the everyday usability expected from the Q5 model line.

Powertrain and performance

The Audi Q5 Sportback utilizes a 2.0-liter TFSI® engine to generate 261 horsepower and 273 lb-ft of torque. The engine is mated to a seven-speed S tronic® dual-clutch transmission and quattro® all-wheel drive with ultra technology to deliver a class-leading 0-60 mph time of 5.7 seconds among compact premium SUVs*.

The Audi SQ5 Sportback delivers 349 horsepower and 369 lb-ft of torque through its 3.0-liter TFSI® V6 engine. Its eight-speed Tiptronic® transmission is well-suited for the low-end torque of the turbocharged V6 and its gears provide quick, smooth shifts,

and propels the car from 0-60 mph in 4.7 seconds.

The SQ5 Sportback also comes standard-equipped with adaptive dampers and offers an available air suspension that allows for adjustment of the ride height in addition to the firmness of the dampers, controllable via the standard Audi drive select. Available dynamic steering offers a variable steering ratio that adjusts based on vehicle speed and the Audi drive select setting.

Interior design and infotainment

Drivers will find Sport front seats, a black headliner, Gray-Brown Birch natural wood inlays, and a panoramic sunroof all standard equipped to further elevate the interior of the Sportback model.

Horizontal lines dominate the interior leading to the large 10.1 inch MMI® touchscreen (1,540 x 720 pixels) which serves as the focal point of the dashboard. The MMI® is backed by the all-new MIB 3 infotainment

system which delivers drivers a better overall user experience through faster processing speeds and higher resolution.

Available second-generation Audi virtual cockpit plus featuring a 12.3-inch display that offers HD resolution of 1920 x 720 pixels. The driver can choose between three viewing modes—classic, sport and dynamic. On SQ5 models, sport mode replaces the classic mode as the default view, and an S Performance mode is added, which brings the tachometer and the speedometer to the front and center of the display and allows for customizable displays to the left and right of the screen.

Standard Audi smartphone interface provides access to wireless Apple CarPlay™ and Google™ Android Auto for compatible devices. The Integrated Toll Module (ITM) is standard on all Q5 models. The ITM is a toll transponder built into the vehicle's rearview mirror, allowing drivers to access compatible toll road services in the U.S. and in parts of Canada without the need for an externally mounted transponder.

Available Bang & Olufsen sound system with 3D sound delivers nearly true-to-life surround sound through 19 speakers, including a subwoofer and center speaker, and a 16-channel amplifier producing an output of 705 watts.

Driver assistance features

Audi Q5 Sportback models maintain a full suite of standard and available driver assistance features, designed to help drivers confidently navigate the road and traffic.

Standard Audi side assist provides blind spot monitoring via LED indicators on the exterior mirror housings at speeds above 9 mph.

Standard Lane departure warning helps keep the driver within the driving lane, if the lane is about to be departed, through corrective steering intervention and wheel vibration at speeds above 40 mph.

Standard Audi pre sense rear (as part of Audi side assist) uses radar sensors in the rear bumper to help detect an impending rear-end collision, and can initiate preventative measures. Standard Parking system plus helps make parking easier with front and rear proximity acoustic parking sensors, when the vehicle is in both reverse and drive, at speeds under 6 mph.

Standard Rear cross traffic assist (as part of Audi side assist and parking system plus) supports the driver when reversing out of a perpendicular parking space. Indicator arrows in the MMI® display can help inform the driver of approaching vehicles, and in critical situations, a warning tone and brake jolt can be applied, prompting the driver to fully stop the vehicle.

Available Adaptive cruise control with

Traffic Jam assist (Premium Plus and Prestige trim levels) assists the driver with acceleration and braking, maintaining speed and following distance between speeds of 0-95 mph and during traffic jam situations between speeds of 0-40 mph.

Available Top view camera system (Premium Plus and Prestige trim levels) uses four wide-angle cameras to display the entire area surrounding, projected on the MMI® screen, allowing the driver to “see” around the vehicle to help with maneuvering in tight spaces.

This information and any vehicle specifications are preliminary and subject to change.

Always pay careful attention to the road, and do not drive while distracted. Audi connect should only be used when it is safe and appropriate. Audi connect services and features are optional, provided with the support of authorized affiliated and third party service providers, and may require additional subscriptions with separate terms and conditions. Available on select models. Certain services collect location information, see Terms of Service for information about how to disable and for other details. Connect services are subject to technologies remaining commercially available, and such services are not guaranteed.

Always obey local speed and traffic laws.

*Class leading 0-60 mph claim based on competitor data available at time of publication. Audi of America, Inc., defines the competitive segment as the 2021 Q5 Sportback, 2021 BMW X4 xDrive 30i, and 2021 Mercedes-Benz GLC 300 4MATIC Coupe.

Driver Assistance features are not substitutes for attentive driving. See Owner's Manual for further details, and important limitations.

Integrated Toll module requires registration and paid subscription with BestPass, Inc. Subscription fee does not cover individual tolls. Coverage area limited. See bestpass.com for details. When using the MMI touch display, always pay careful attention to the road, and do not drive while distracted. See Owner's Manual for further details, and important limitations.

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