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The Arab Youth Startup Marketplace and the exponential growth of Startups in UAE and the Region



عام التسامح
YEAR OF TOLERANCE

ADNOC gears up with German and US support

Bilfinger has secured a major contract from Adnoc to provide turnkey installation, replacement and modification services for its refining unit in Ruwais. Adnoc's CEO met with ExxonMobil's CEO to explore new opportunities for collaboration in the upstream and downstream sectors, and discuss wider regional and business-related developments of mutual interest.

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Around one-fifth of Arab world's 100 most promising startups are based in the UAE, according to the World Economic Forum's latest report. The UAE is home to 20 of the best startups - only Jordan has more in the Arab region with 27 startups that will likely shape the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Among the best startups in the UAE is the region's first Unicorn, the ride-hailing app company Careem, which was recently acquired by its bigger US rival Uber for \$3.1 billion.

Other most promising startups are financial comparison websites Souqalmal and Yallacomp; digital asset wallet and exchange BitOasis; pick-up and delivery services app fetchr; online marketplace for peer-to-peer finance Beehive P2P; travel search engine Wego; grocery site BulkWhiz; and online eyewear store Eyewa. The UAE's other promising startups include communication technology firm to reduce accidents Derq; online store The Luxury Closet; children edutainment app Lamasa; used goods marketplace Melltoo; HR platform One Clique; online investment platform Sarwa; freelance recruitment platform Searchie; Desert Control; Hydro Wind Energy; and Amal Glass. A recent study on the eve of the Annual Investment Meeting (AIM) Startup revealed that the emirate of Dubai is one of the world's top destinations. Over two-thirds of startups in the UAE, around 69 per cent, are involved in e-commerce,

infrastructure and software as a service, and marketplaces. "The Arab world will need its private sector to address youth unemployment, the current skills gap for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the inclusion of women in the workforce," said Mirek Dusek, deputy head of the Centre for Geopolitical and Regional Affairs, member of the executive committee, WEF. According to a World Economic Forum report, Egypt has 17 most promising startups - third highest

- followed by 10 in Saudi Arabia; seven in Lebanon; six each in Bahrain and Tunisia; four in Palestine and remaining in other countries.

مركز
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ARAB YOUTH CENTER



The Arab Youth Startup Marketplace (AYSM) is an event organized by the Arab Youth Center, under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs and Chairman of the Arab Youth Center (AYC). The second edition of the marketplace took place on the 1st and 2nd of May 2019 at the Emirates Towers in Dubai. This year AYSM invited 100 cutting-edge startups from around the Arab world to participate and showcase their solutions. The travel and accommodation expenses for one of the founders of the selected startups are covered, and they showcased their startup in front of high-profile guests, including ministers and investors. More than ten finance and investment deals and partnerships

have been struck between young Arab entrepreneurs and investors during the event. The event was dedicated to bringing together aspiring Arab startups from across the Arab region for the purpose of showcasing their creative ventures, exchanging knowledge with like-minded creatives and industry leaders, and ultimately collaborating with investors to boost their growth. As part of its initiatives, the AYSM seeks to establish a platform aimed at enhancing engagement between young entrepreneurs and investors from across the Arab world, creating an ecosystem that nurtures business leadership in creative industries and promotes knowledge exchange that results in business growth and prosperity. Ohoud bint Khalfan Al Roumi Minister of State for Happiness and Wellbeing, Dena Assaf UN Resident Coordinator for the UAE and Dr. Marwan Ibrahim Alzarouni CEO of Dubai Blockchain Center, visited the AYSM and gained insight about the creative startups on display. Shamma bint Suhail Faris Al Mazrui Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Deputy Chairman of AYC said that the Arab youth had proven their merit by presenting innovative solutions, game-changing ideas and ventures which underscore their desire and commitment to serving and contributing to the progress and prosperity of their communities. "Easy-to-implement ideas into productive projects provided by the young entrepreneurs will support visions and efforts of governments in the Arab World to push development and prosperity wheels forward and encourage young minds to unleash their potential energies in areas of excellence and innovation so they can contribute in efforts aimed at building sustainable-innovation-driven economy," she added. The event was organized in collaboration with strategic partners, including Global Entrepreneurship Network, National Program for SMEs, Google and Dubai Technology Entrepreneur Centre.

Is Dubai really the most attractive in the region for new Startups?

For several years, Dubai, with its strategic location and stability, has been able to establish itself as the hub for the private sector across the Middle East and North Africa (Mena). Boasting superior infrastructure, vibrant cultural and entertainment lifestyle sector, the emirate has been able to attract expatriates from

across the world to its manmade islands and glittering skyscrapers. The latest stakeholders for this destination are startups and the government is working hard to maintain their presence. At the World Economic Forum (WEF) that took place in Jordan at the beginning of April this year, Dubai announced that it would grant the top 100 Arab startups (picked by WEF) five-year visas. The UAE is already home to 20 of them and in a statement to WAM, Abdullah Bin Touq, secretary general of the UAE cabinet said the move "reflects our commitment to facilitate businesses, create an attractive and encouraging environment for growth, and underline the UAE's position as a global destination for talents".



Shamma bint Suhail Faris Al Mazrui

But Dubai is expensive, the most expensive city in Mena for startups due to the high real estate prices, visas, licenses and telecommunications costs. A recent report by OC&C identified Dubai as one of the most expensive cities in the world to launch a startup, accounting for 13.4% of income per capita, compared with 6.8 per cent in Saudi Arabia and just 1.1 per cent in the US. Therefore, several other cities across the region are attempting to position themselves as an alternative destination hub for startups in the Mena Region.

Abu Dhabi

The latest is Abu Dhabi, which will be providing a Dh1 billion (\$272 million) package for startups as part of a new entrepreneurship space called Hub71 launched in partnership with sovereign wealth fund Mubadala Investment Company and Japan-based investment bank Softbank as well as Microsoft and Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM). Half of this investment plan will be used to provide subsidies for housing, office space, health insurance and the remaining Dh535 million for an investment

fund for both startups and venture capital (VC) firms which will be deployed over the next three to five years. The government is encouraging VCs to set up base at Hub71 by co-investing with them through a government matching scheme. It is hoping to attract startups from around the world by promising them a network that includes Softbank and Mubadala's portfolio companies which includes Uber, China's Didi and India's OYO. "What makes Hub71 different from other initiatives in the region is the partnership strategy," says Ibrahim Ajami, head of Mubadala Ventures. Working with government, universities, and global tech companies like Microsoft will enable an ecosystem that Abu Dhabi hopes will propel it to the ultimate destination for entrepreneurs. "They get to sit alongside leading tech companies from around the world – that dialogue, that engagement is absolutely immense," says Ajami. "The role of Softbank is another part of our partnership strategy. Softbank sits on some of the greatest companies in the world and a lot of them are asking about how to expand to the region."

Saudi Arabia

Networking, while beneficial is not enough to guarantee success. Most startups would prefer easy access to market and Saudi Arabia, for many, is the most lucrative market in the region. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has repositioned the small to medium sized enterprise (SME) sector as one of the most important for the kingdom's economic prosperity. The government launched the General Authority for SMEs known as Monshaat, whose sole mandate is to help, aid and enable SMEs a one-stop shop. Over the past few months Monshaat has announced a roster of new initiatives which has included launching a government-owned VC firm – the Saudi Venture Capital Company (SVC) with a fund worth SAR 5 billion (\$1.33 billion) which it will invest directly in the country's startups as well as VC funds. It has also signed agreements with 20 global and regional VCs, including with Wamda Capital to facilitate the visa and licensing process for their portfolio companies. Saudi Arabia is the Middle East's biggest economy with a gross domestic product (GDP) of more than \$680 billion and a population of 33 million of which 70 per cent are below the age of 30. This demographic is technologically savvy with strong purchasing power and



for startups, cracking the Saudi Arabian market is one way to ensure growth. But the country's restrictive social and cultural requirements make it difficult to attract talent. Riyadh-based logistics company Salasa has considered relocating to Dubai in a bid to attract the talent that is lacking in Saudi. "We used to say lack of funds was a challenge, but this is not an issue anymore especially with government support. A big hassle for us is to find someone talented who wants to work for a startup. This is why sometimes we think if we move to Dubai, it will be easier to acquire talent," says Abdulmajeed Alymeni, co-founder and CEO at Salasa.

Amman and Cairo

Two countries that do boast talent however, are Jordan and Egypt. During the opening plenary session at WEF, Jordan's King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein told a room of the region's top businessmen and policymakers that his country was ripe for investment and a destination for startups. "Our most important strength is Jordan's high-skill human capital," he said. "Our young people are globally connected, tech-savvy, fluent in multiple languages and determined to succeed. They are proven assets to every enterprise. And we have already seen this strength at work, in the success of Jordan's ICT industry, which has created thousands of new jobs and accessed markets across the region and beyond." Amman provides many of the engineers for the back offices of many startups and

technology companies in the region, including Amazon. But they tend to be more expensive than engineers in Cairo, where the region's most populous city is re-establishing its entrepreneurial flair amid a flurry of activity. Kuwait-based Boutiqaat is currently considering opening a back office in Cairo. "I can hire 10 engineers in Egypt for the price of one in Jordan," says Fahd Mannaa, IT manager at Boutiqaat. But cost alone is not enough to attract startups to establish headquarters in Egypt, or Jordan, which lack the same living standards as the Gulf. They are likely to remain as the backend offices for the rest of the region.

Bahrain

The country making the strongest effort to replace Dubai as the region's hub is Bahrain. The small Gulf state enjoys easy access to Saudi Arabia, a bankruptcy law that allows startups to fail and restart and Al Waha's \$100 million fund of funds of which half has already been invested. Bahrain has also adopted a "cloud first" policy and is home to the Middle East's Amazon Web Services (AWS) infrastructure which will go live this year and will create thousands of jobs according to Amazon. Much of the progress has been led by the Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) which recently launched a special programme for startups by providing them with a fast-tracking service for applications to establish a presence in the country and an opportunity to pitch and access funding from Bahrain's Sovereign

Wealth Fund as well as the venture capital partners of Al Waha. Bahrain has also worked hard to become a regional hub for financial technology (fintech) companies with the establishment of Bahrain Fintech Bay, home to a regulatory sandbox, co-working spaces and regional and global banks.

So will any one city take Dubai's crown as the Middle East's startup hub? Perhaps, but in a region where the markets are so fragmented, it would be better if these countries focused on specific sectors or technologies and become a hub for that, rather than attempt to attract all the startups of the Middle East. "Today, Dubai is a hub mostly because it's easier to attract talent, doing business is easier, but the market is pretty small and it is difficult for a startup to flourish in Dubai alone," says Abdulkader Lamaa, vice-president of digital at McKinsey Digital Labs. "It is healthy to have more hubs coming up and more investments coming in but the disadvantage of too many hubs is sharing of information. It would be more useful to focus on sectors or certain technologies. As a region we would benefit from some level of personalization."

Sources:

www.wam.ae

www.wamda.com



UAE business conditions improve; confidence levels hit new high creating new jobs

Latest economic data show how companies are doing and whether they're still hiring. Confidence among business owners in the UAE hit a new high, while conditions posted their sharpest improvement in more than a year last month, suggesting stronger growth in the local economy, new data released on Sunday showed. However, while optimism levels are high, employers are still reluctant to expand their payrolls or recruit new staff, leading an economic expert to believe that consumer spending will likely remain subdued.

The Emirates NBD Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which is designed to provide insights into how the country's entrepreneurs are faring, climbed for the second month running in April, hitting 57.6 from 55.7 in March. It suggested that operating conditions in the non-oil private sector showed sharpest improvement since December 2017, thanks to new orders and ongoing projects. Confidence among companies was also the highest since seven years ago. About 82 per cent of those surveyed for the study said output is likely to rise over the coming year.

"The improvement in the volume of activity and new order growth last month is encouraging. However, with firms still competing on price, there is still a reluctance to boost hiring and we haven't seen a meaningful improvement in job growth. Household consumption is likely to remain constrained in the absence

of job and/ or wage growth," said Khadija Haque, Head of MENA Research at Emirates NBD. Economic growth in the UAE was earlier forecast to be at 2.6 per cent in 2019 and 3 per cent in 2020, as the country pushes infrastructure investments ahead of Dubai's Expo 2020, according to the World Bank.

In Emirates NBD's study, higher new orders combined with a number of ongoing projects, led to a substantial growth in business activity in the UAE last month. Output prices in April, however, fell for the seventh consecutive period, and was more marked compared to April, as companies resorted to offering price discounts to boost sales.

UAE jobs, skills in demand in 2019

More employment opportunities will open up for jobseekers in UAE in the coming new year, as corporate heads are feeling increasingly confident about their company's growth prospects, according to the latest analysis. In 2019, the most in demand professionals will include IT security analysts, systems administrators, personal assistants, as well as those with qualifications and experience in accounting and finance professionals, according to recruitment specialist Robert Half. Other hiring experts said skills that are in demand right now and likely to remain so next year are data scientists and analysts, project managers, digital and cyber security experts.

There are also opportunities for jobseekers looking to land administration and support roles. Robert Half has recently polled chief financial officers (CFOs) in the UAE, and the majority (89 per cent) said they feel positive about where their business is heading. The rise in business confidence is thanks to the UAE's economic diversification agenda and the growing adoption of digital technologies in the region. Organizations are investing in new technologies, including artificial intelligence and robotics, and this in turn drives the need for employees with specialist or digital skills.

The introduction of VAT will also continue to require firms to hire accounting and finance professionals. "Numerous economic indicators show that business confidence and growth are on the rise in the UAE region, which is creating more opportunities for talented professionals to develop their careers," said Gareth El Mettouri, associate director of Robert Half UAE. According to other sources, many companies continue to hire new staff and replacements, with annual attrition levels in the UAE pegged at 6 per cent to 8 per cent. "As per research, the market in UAE has attrition levels of 6 per cent to 8 per cent annually. Hence several companies recruit and hire for replacements too.

This continuously creates opportunity for new job seekers and also for high potential talent," said Harish Bhatia, regional director for Middle East and Africa at Korn Ferry. He said newly opened businesses in sectors like food and beverage, services and hospitality are actively recruiting for new staff as well. "Also, specific skill sets are in higher demand due to changing nature of businesses; these skill sets are: data scientists and analysts, project managers, digital and cyber security experts - these roles are in demand across a variety of industries and hence hiring for them is in high demand."

"In terms of administration and support jobs, organizations are focused on driving efficiencies and hence not fully replacing headcount in functions such as administration, clerical support and accounting. More organizations are focused on reviewing their structures and size to build further efficiencies and save costs in support functions. We will see relatively subdued hiring for these roles."

Sources:
www.gulfnews.com

ADNOC awards Bilfinger Middle East 3 big EPC contracts and explores new opportunities for collaboration with ExxonMobil

Bilfinger, an engineering and industrial services provider in the UAE, will design, supply and install upgrade solutions for hydrocracker (HCK) and hydroskimmer (HSK) units. Tie-ins are expected to be carried out during a major turnaround in 2020. Under a second contract, Bilfinger will provide specialised EPC services for the installation of Bernoulli filters for the seawater network of the HCK unit as well as LPG transfer pumps and progressive cavity pumps at the HSK plant. Bilfinger was also awarded a contract at the same industrial complex to perform piping modifications for service water and eye shower facilities. The scope involves replacing certain lines with associated civil and structural works for above-ground and underground pipe network systems. All three projects are expected to be completed in 2020. Commenting on the triple contract wins, Ali Vezvaei, president and CEO of Bilfinger Middle East, said, "We are grateful for ADNOC's continued trust in our capabilities and equally delighted to build upon our long-standing relationship focusing on the optimization of their already world-class downstream operations at the epicenter of the country's hydrocarbons industry in Ruwais."

Dr. Sultan bin Ahmad Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of State and Group CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), and Darren W. Woods, Chairman and CEO of Exxon Mobil Corporation (ExxonMobil), met to explore new opportunities for collaboration in the upstream and downstream sectors, and discuss wider regional and business-related developments of mutual interest.

The discussions coincided with a joint visit to review the progress of the over US\$30 billion (AED110 billion) expansion taking Upper Zakum to a production capacity of 750 thousand barrels per day (mbpd) and 1 million barrels per day (mmbpd) respectively, with the latter planned for 2024.

ADNOC is leveraging mutually beneficial partnerships to drive new commercial opportunities and expand its portfolio across the upstream and downstream sectors, to enable the UAE's socio-economic development objectives. Dr. Al Jaber said, "Our partnership with ExxonMobil going back 80 years reflects the strong, deep-rooted and long-standing economic and political ties between the UAE and the US. At ADNOC, we continue to place great importance on our strategic partnerships with the US energy sector, which has contributed to further enhancing the economic relations between our two countries."



"Our existing partnership with ExxonMobil on the Upper Zakum field is a prime example of how ADNOC engages with world-class partners that bring expertise and advanced technology to unlock value from our resources, for mutual benefit, and deliver the greatest possible returns to the UAE. We are keen to strengthen this strategic partnership across the entire value chain, as we accelerate delivery of our 2030 smart growth strategy." During the visit, Dr. Al Jaber and Mr. Woods inspected key facilities at Al Ghallan Island which is under development for future production as part of the ongoing project, known as UZ750, to increase the production capacity of the Upper Za-

kum field to 750 mbpd. They also planted a Ghaf tree on the island, celebrating the UAE's national tree and official symbol of the 'Year of Tolerance.' The evergreen tree, native to the desert, is an important part of the UAE's rich heritage, symbolizing resilience, unity, and peace. Woods said, "We have shared many successes in the UAE together over the past 80 years, most notably with ADNOC in the Upper Zakum joint venture, and we look forward to building on this strong foundation."

The joint success between ADNOC and ExxonMobil on Upper Zakum is a testament to what is possible when national and international energy companies work together."

The UZ750 project is estimated to see an investment of around US\$21.8 billion (AED80 billion) and comprises four new artificial islands, to accommodate drilling rigs, processing facilities and infrastructure required to handle production capacity growth to 750 mbpd, effectively creating an onshore environment offshore. Dr. Al Jaber and Mr. Woods discussed the new substantial conventional and unconventional oil and gas exploration opportunities in Abu Dhabi,

following ADNOC's announcement, last week, to offer five major offshore and onshore blocks for competitive bidding. The CEOs also discussed downstream investments, including gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) opportunities, following ADNOC's 2018 announcement of ambitious expansion plans in Petrochemicals and Refining.

ExxonMobil and ADNOC share a long history of technical collaboration in the downstream business both through licensing of technologies as well as support in catalysts. Both companies are exploring means by which this relationship can be extended further into research and development (R&D). The

visit follows the award, in April, by ADNOC and its joint venture partners, ExxonMobil Abu Dhabi Offshore Petroleum Company Limited and INPEX Corporation (INPEX), of a Front-End Engineering Design (FEED) contract to increase the production capacity of the Upper Zakum oilfield to 1 mmbpd by 2024. The 1 mmbpd expansion project, which is an integral component of ADNOC's plan to increase its oil production capacity to 4 mmbpd by 2020 and 5 mmbpd by 2030, is estimated to cost approximately US\$ 8 billion (AED29.4 billion), including drilling-related expenditure. It will capture synergies from the existing UZ750 project, optimizing costs and maximizing value for ADNOC and its partners.

The Upper Zakum Development utilizes extended reach drilling to optimize well numbers and enable maximum reservoir contact. In recent years, the Development saw one of the world's longest wells at 35,800 feet measured depth. The Upper Zakum oilfield, located offshore Abu Dhabi, is the second-largest offshore oilfield and the fourth-largest oilfield in the world. The Upper Zakum Development is also enabling synergies with the Lower Zakum Concession through shared multi-well pad drilling and streamlined rig utilization that are enhancing efficiencies and optimizing costs. In addition, and to gain further efficiencies, new extended reach drilling activity for the Lower Zakum Concession is expected to start later this year from Upper Zakum's Al Ghallan Island. Artificial islands provide significant cost and environmental benefits, particularly in shallow water, by enabling the use of lower-cost land-drilling rigs instead of high-cost offshore jack-up drilling rigs. ADNOC has a proven record of developing artificial islands and, as part of its continued commitment to protecting the UAE's marine environment, adopts this approach in developing Abu Dhabi's shallow water hydrocarbon resources to minimize environmental impacts and optimize costs.

As a result of ADNOC's long-standing experience in utilizing artificial islands, it has also adopted this approach in the development of the "Ghasha" Concession where 10 artificial islands are being constructed for the Hail, Ghasha and Dalma offshore sour gas megaproject. ADNOC has a strong track record of energy cooperation with US companies across its entire value chain, and this has strengthened in recent months. In October 2018, Baker Hughes, a GE company, acquired a five percent stake in ADNOC's subsidiary, ADNOC Drilling, in a transaction that valued ADNOC Drilling at approximately US\$ 11 billion (AED 40.3 billion). In addition, in February this year, ADNOC signed an agreement awarding Occidental Petroleum an onshore block following Abu Dhabi's first-ever competitive exploration bid round. ADNOC also collaborates with Occidental in onshore sour gas production and processing through ADNOC Sour Gas, a joint venture company between ADNOC, which owns a 60 percent share and Occidental, which owns a 40 percent share.

Sources:

www.oilreviewmiddleeast.com

www.wam.ae

UAE FINANCE

UAE provides financial aid worth AED19.2 billion in 2018

The value of financial aid provided by the UAE's federal government and local governments totaled AED19.2 billion in 2018, reflecting the country's keenness to support its people and strengthen community cohesion. According to statistics from the Ministry of Finance, this aid accounted for five percent of the government's total financial expenditure in 2018, which amounted to AED389.3 billion. Along with cash, the aid also included social aid, subsidies, financial support for partner organizations, and services for vulnerable community segments, such as people of determination, the elderly and families.

The UAE Vision 2021 includes indexes related to social cohesion, based on the principles and values of national identity and social cooperation among the entire community. The national agenda also

aims to maintain a cohesive community and preserve the UAE's culture, heritage and traditions. Data from the ministry highlights the fact that the aid provided by federal and local governments in 2018 increased by AED3.2 billion in the first quarter of that year, rising to AED7.55 billion by the second quarter. During the third quarter of 2018, the value of aid amounted to AED3.1 billion, reaching AED5.32 billion by the end of the year.

www.wam.ae

INTERNATIONAL FINANCE

ADX participates in Milken Institute's Global Conference in US

ABU DHABI, 7th May, 2019 (WAM) -- As part of its continuous efforts to build a broad network of international financial institutions and entities, Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange, ADX, participated in the Milken Institute's

Global Conference in Los Angeles from 28th April to 1st May, 2019. The delegation, headed by Khalifa Salem Al Mansouri, Acting Chief Executive of ADX, also visited NASDAQ and the New York Stock Exchange, NYSE.

Khalifa Al Mansouri said, "Given ADX's leading position in the region, we truly believe in the need for continuous and effective communication between senior officials, analysts and thought leaders across the globe to discuss the various social, economic, educational and development issues that affect the future of our world."

During the delegation's visit to NASDAQ and NYSE, Al Mansouri highlighted ADX's efforts to support the Abu Dhabi plan and bolster the nation's economy by providing a secure and stable investment environment. He also met with Adena Friedman, President of Nasdaq, and a group of NYSE officials. They discussed the policies and trends in the securities industry on a global level, as well as ways

for further cooperation between the Exchange, NASDAQ and NYSE.

The number of US investors in ADX reached 4,046, including 2,081 institutional investors by the end of the first quarter of 2019. The total value of their transactions (selling + buying) during the first quarter of 2019 reached AED3.2 billion compared to AED1.5 billion during the same period of 2019, an increase of 106 percent.

www.wam.ae

TRADE

Abu Dhabi's non-oil foreign merchandise trade hits AED35.8 bn in two months

The value of non-oil foreign merchandise trade through Abu Dhabi ports increased 11.5 percent from AED32.1 bn in Jan-Feb. 2018 to AED35.8 bn in the same period of 2019. This was the result of a 47.0 percent increase in re-exports from AED 6.0 bn to AED 8.8 billion and 5.6 percent increase in imports, while the value of non-oil exports decreased by 0.3 percent in the same period.

Total trade increased by 7.3 percent in February 2019 compared with February 2018 due to an increase in re-exports by 54.7 percent, while the value of exports and imports decreased by 9.4 percent and 0.2 percent respectively in the same period. The growth in re-exports reflects the prestigious position now boasted by the emirate, in particular and the UAE in general as a regional hub for non-oil trade thanks to the country's modern infrastructure, including strategic ports and state-of-the-art facilities.

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BUSINESS FRAMEWORK

Dubai DED issues 2,805 new licenses in April 2019

The Business Registration and Licensing, BRL, sector in the Department of

Economic Development, DED, Dubai, issued 2,805 new licenses during April 2019, a growth of 60% compared to April 2018 (1,753). The new licenses created 8,375 jobs in the labour market. Among the new licenses issued, 49% were professional, 48.1% commercial, 2.3% related to tourism, and 0.6% industry.

The 'Business Map' digital platform of DED, which seeks to reflect the economic realities in Dubai by providing vital data on each license category including their numbers and distribution on a monthly basis, saw 29,813 business registration and licensing transactions being completed during the month of April 2019, a growth of 13% compared to April 2018 (26,393).

The report showed that License Renewal accounted for 13,140 transactions during April 2019, a growth of 3.8% compared to April 2018 (12,660), while 6,259 transactions were related to Auto Renewal via text messages, a growth of 85.2% compared to the same period in 2018 (3,380). During the month of April 2019, the number of Trade Name Reservation was 4,513, a growth of 36.6% compared to April 2018 (3,305), while the number of Initial Approvals reached 3,664. BRL also issued 185 instant licenses, a growth of 112.6% compared to the same period in 2018 (87).

The Instant License is issued in a single step without the need for either the Memorandum of Association (MOA) or an existing location for the first year only. The outsourced service centres of DED issued 20,724 transactions in April 2019, thus demonstrating their vital role in delivering value-added services to the public in Dubai.

The number of DED Trader licenses during April 2019 reached 166 license, a growth of 19.4% compared to the same period in 2018 (139). The report also showed that the top nationalities who secured licenses in April 2019 were: Bangladesh followed by India, Pakistan, Egypt, Britain, China, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, The Philippines, and Afghanistan.

The report highlighted the distribution of the new licenses during April 2019 according to the main areas in Dubai, with Deira accounting for the

largest share (1,445), followed by Bur Dubai (1,357), and Hatta (3). The top sub-regions that accounted for 60.5% of all the transactions were: Al Garhoud (14.7%), Burj Khalifa (10.8%), Port Saeed (6.8%), Al Khabaisi (6.4%), Dubai World Trade Centre 1 (5.8%), Al Barsha 1 (4.3%), Umm Al Ramoul (3.6%), Al Marar (2.9%), Oud Metha (2.7%) and Naif (2.5%).

Trade and repair services accounted for 34% of the new licenses issued in April 2019 according to the distribution of economic activities, followed by Real estate, leasing and business services (27.8%), community and personal services (11.6%), building and construction (11.2%), transport, storage and communications (4.6%), hotels group (4.3%), manufacturing (2.4%), financial brokerage (1.4%), health and labour (1.2%), education (1%), and agriculture (0.5%).

www.gulftoday.ae

LOGISTICS

dnata, Lufthansa Group expand partnership in US

dnata, the Dubai National Air Transport Association, has been selected to provide ramp, secure clean and passenger handling services to Lufthansa at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport and now serves the airline group, including Swiss International Air Lines, Austrian Airlines and Edelweiss Air, at eight airports in the country. In Austin, dnata will handle Lufthansa's new Frankfurt flight, which the airline operates five times a week, using its Airbus A330-300 aircraft. The ground handler's trained staff will ensure a safe and seamless travel experience for up to 70,000 passengers a year from check-in to boarding, and from disembarkation to baggage collection.

Including the German carrier, dnata now provides quality and reliable air services to three airlines in the state capital of Texas with a team of 75 customer-oriented aviation professionals. David Barker, CEO of dnata USA, said, "We are proud to be the ground handler of choice for a leading global airline group in the world's largest

aviation market. Our newest contract with Lufthansa is a testament to our successful partnership and the consistent high quality our teams deliver across the US. We stay committed to providing best-in-class services to our airline customers and their passengers, every day.”

Holger Bremes, Director Commercial Airport Infrastructure at Lufthansa Group, commented, “As a premium airline, Lufthansa Airlines is excited to grow the North American relationship with the start of service in Austin with dnata. With our very positive service experience from destinations like Boston (BOS), Los Angeles (LAX), San Francisco (SFO), and New York (JFK) we are looking forward to providing first class service to our customers with our handling partner at Austin Airport.”

dnata commenced ground handling and cargo operations in the United States in 2016. Since then, the company has invested more than US\$45 million in facilities, equipment, training and technology, while continually expanding its operations in the country.

www.aviationbusinessme.com

E-GOVERNMENT

Sultan Al Mansouri launches new SCA electronic services system

Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri, Minister of Economy and Chairman of the Securities and Commodities Authority, SCA, launched a new electronic service

es system for the Authority. The system aims to improve the SCA’s internal procedures and serve its clients, including brokers, investment funds, investors, financial services companies and the securities and commodities market.

SCA will also launch a new range of e-services, which will cover specialist training, professional testing and enforcement, issuance and registration, market supervision and compliance. Al Mansouri said that employing smart applications to improve the SCA’s services is a strategic priority of its board while noting that the new system will be automated and the public and other customers will be linked to the services through smart devices.

He added the new system will achieve the vision of the country’s leadership to develop a comprehensive electronic infrastructure for all government authorities, which will reinforce of the UAE’s international ranking in government services competitiveness indexes. The new system is being implemented as part of the UAE Vision 2021 and the country’s strategic plan, he further added while pointing out that the SCA aims to provide innovative automated services that are easy to access.

www.wam.ae

E-VISA

Online applications now open for UAE’s new 10-year visas

Foreign nationals eligible for long-term residence permits in the UAE,

as announced by the government last year, can now submit an online application for a six-month entry permit. The application is part of the process in completing procedures related to the expat’s purpose of residence, which will enable them to finalize their immigration process in the UAE.

The following categories of foreign nationals can now lodge an application through the Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship’s website - entrepreneurs, investors, individuals with exceptional talents and outstanding students. Applications must be supported with a proof of long-term residence eligibility and a fee of AED300, a statement said.

The move follows an announcement by the UAE Cabinet in March to approve the regulatory framework for the issuance of 10-year residence permits to investors, entrepreneurs and innovators. The UAE government has granted the first batch of long-term visas to the winners and finalists of the Mohammed bin Rashid Medal for Scientific Distinction.

In November, the UAE Cabinet issued a decision to adopt a new long-term system of entry visas for investors and professional talents. The system will grant investors and talents up to 10-year residency visas for specialists in medical, scientific, research and technical fields, as well as for all scientists and innovators, as well as five-year residency visas for students studying in the UAE, and 10-year visas for exceptional students.

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