

Empowering the next generation of leaders with digital skills and education is imperative for Bahrain Vision 2030



JASON CAO

2020 served us all a reminder that a robust information and communications technology (ICT) sector is vital for our global economy's continuous growth. Our world changed in ways few could have expected due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, and technology has ensured business continuity and provided our economy a fighting chance for survival. From online education, remote work, to e-commerce and digital banking, with the use of technology, we are all able to continue our lives as close to normal as possible.

Bahrain recognized quite early on that ICT is key to our society's progress and economic growth. The government has taken proactive steps to build a world-class ICT infrastructure that boosts connectivity and innovation. Bahrain has identified the critical role of the latest technology in promoting economic growth, job creation and human development, espoused in its Economic Vision 2030.

But cutting-edge technology requires advanced skills to match. There is no time more pertinent than the present to invest in talent development, specifically in the ICT sector, to ensure an ample supply of qualified people available to leverage technology in realizing the ambitious plans of Bahrain's leaders.

Knowledge and skills are the cornerstones of any country's economic prosperity. ICT technologies promote equal access

to education and serve as a building block of digital skills education. And talent building is a crucial component of national development. Bahrain enjoys a strong position as a globally competitive ICT hub and having leaders who are promoting socio-economic growth on the back of cutting-edge technologies. These two factors alone make it essential for local talent to be nurtured to continue the development of Bahrain's digital economy. After all, massive investment in building infrastructure and capabilities will only get you so far – talent is what will allow Bahrain to go above and beyond in terms of ICT implementation, R&D, and advancements.

Developing these skills cannot be the sole responsibility of governments – partnerships between the public sector, academia and technology companies are essential to knowledge building. As a leading technology solutions provider to Bahraini enterprises, telcos and small businesses, Huawei is closely aligned with Bahrain's Vision 2030 and the government efforts in developing ICT talent in the country. We established a roadmap for helping develop this talent under the Bahrain Drive on Talent initiative.

Huawei Bahrain partnered with five leading universities in the Kingdom – Bahrain Polytechnic, University of Bahrain, Arab Open University (AOU), AMA University and Ahlia University – to develop a Huawei ICT Academy at their campuses to provide training to their students. Furthermore, through the Seeds for Future Programme, we provide 10 top Bahraini university students each year an opportunity to travel to our headquarters in China, where they are exposed first-hand to our world-leading technologies.

The annual Huawei ICT Competition is the ultimate university battle of wits. More than 200 students from Bahrain participated in the 2019 -2020 edition of the competition, with three Bahraini students ranked in the top 10 at the global showdown. For four consecutive years, Bahrain students have emerged among the top three teams globally.

We remain committed to developing ICT talent in Bahrain. We are currently in discussions with different institutions and ministries for employee training. The sum of these initiatives will help Bahrain maintain its technology edge as the region marches towards a post-oil future.

(The author is CEO of Huawei Bahrain)

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Emirates to fly from India again after ban over virus

● Dubai said on Saturday that only passengers from India "with a valid residence visa and who have received two doses of a UAE-approved vaccine" would be allowed to travel to the emirate

● Some 300 flights a week were operating between the UAE and India before the ban was announced in April

AFP | Dubai

Aviation giant Emirates said yesterday it will resume flights from India from next week, after Dubai lifted a ban imposed when coronavirus cases spiked.



Emirates airline says it will resume flights from India from June 23, after Dubai lifted a ban over the coronavirus

The United Arab Emirates, which includes Dubai, suspended all flights from India -- including for transit passengers -- in April in an effort to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"We will resume carrying passengers from South Africa, Nigeria and India... from June 23," Emirates said in a statement.

Dubai said on Saturday that only passengers from India "with a valid residence visa and who have received two doses of a UAE-approved vaccine" would be allowed to travel to the emirate.

They would also need a negative PCR test taken within 48 hours of departure, a rapid test

four hours before departure, and another PCR test on arrival with "institutional quarantine" required until the results are received.

Dubai authorities did not specify the rules for transit passengers and Emirates did not say whether transit passengers were allowed to fly through Dubai en route to third nations.

Some 300 flights a week were operating between the UAE and India before the ban was announced in April, according to local media, making the air corridor one of the busiest in the world.

The UAE is home to some 3.3 million Indians who make up a third of the population -- most of them in Dubai.

Some Indians who had been stranded in their homeland during a coronavirus surge had hired private jets to take them back to the UAE, which had exempted private jets from the ban.

Major Gulf markets end lower

● OPEC and its allies agreed to extend most oil output cuts into April

Reuters

Most major stock markets in the Gulf ended lower yesterday, with the Saudi index leading the losses, although Qatar bucked the trend to close higher.

The benchmark index in Saudi Arabia, fell 0.6%, with Al Rajhi Bank and petrochemical firm Saudi Basic Industries dropping 1.8% each.

The kingdom's April crude oil exports fell to their lowest level since June 2020, official data showed on Thursday.

OPEC and its allies agreed

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▼ 0.6% to 10,791
ABU DHABI	■ at 6,649
DUBAI	▼ 0.4% to 2,851
QATAR	▲ 0.2% to 10,763
EGYPT	▼ 0.7% to 9,798
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.4% to 1,568
OMAN	▼ 0.5% to 4,057
KUWAIT	▲ 0.2% to 6,963



to extend most oil output cuts into April but Saudi Arabia said it would extend its voluntary oil output cut of 1 million bpd, and would decide in following months when to gradually phase it out.

The country's gross domestic product also shrank 3% in the first quarter, slightly less than official estimates and compared

with a 1% contraction last year, as a sharp fall in the oil sector pulled back the economy, data showed.

Dubai's main share index lost 0.4%, weighed down by a 0.8% fall in sharia-compliant lender Dubai Islamic Bank and Emirates NBD Bank was down 0.4%.

Dubai's state airport operator said it was hoping for a "flood"

of travelers as the coronavirus pandemic eases. It targets passenger traffic through Dubai International Airport to rising 8% to 28 million this year as demand recovers.

The airport handled 5.75 million passengers in the first quarter, a 67.8% fall compared to the same quarter in 2020 before the pandemic halted traffic.

In Abu Dhabi, the index traded flat as gains in financial shares were offset by declines in telecoms firm Etisalat.

In Qatar, the index closed 0.2% higher, with Qatar Islamic Bank rising 0.7%.

Last week, ratings agency Fitch affirmed Qatar at 'AA-' with a stable outlook.

Outside the Gulf, Egypt's blue-chip index declined 0.7%, hit by a 2.7% fall in Abu Qir Fertilizer and Chemical Industries.

New offer made over Suez blockage

Reuters | Ismailia, Egypt

The owners of a giant container ship that blocked the Suez Canal in March have made a new offer in a compensation dispute with the canal authority, a lawyer for the authority said on Sunday, as a court ruling on the case was postponed for two weeks.

The Ever Given container ship has been anchored in a lake between two stretches of the canal since it was dislodged on March 29. It had been grounded across the canal for six days, blocking hundreds of ships and disrupting global trade.

The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) demanded \$916 million in compensation to cover salvage efforts, reputational damage and lost revenue, before publicly lowering the request to \$550 million.

The Ever Given's Japanese owners Shoen Kisen and its in-



Ship Ever Given, one of the world's largest container ships, is seen after it was fully floated in Suez Canal

surers have disputed the claim and the ship's detention under an Egyptian court order.

Negotiations had been continuing until Saturday, SCA lawyer Khaled Abu Bakr told a court hearing in Ismailia over the ship's detention. The ship's owners had put in a new offer, he said, without giving details.

The SCA's chairman previous-

ly said Shoen Kisen had offered to pay \$150 million.

A court ruling was due on Sunday after several delays, but Shoen Kisen's legal team asked to allow more time for negotiations, one of their lawyers said.

Judicial sources said the case was postponed until July 4 to allow for "friendly settlement" between the parties.

This week UK Club, one of the ship's insurers, said it was engaged in "serious and constructive negotiations" with the SCA, and was "hopeful of a positive resolution to these negotiations in the near future".



The Suez Canal is an artificial sea-level waterway in Egypt, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the Isthmus of Suez and dividing Africa and Asia. The canal is part of the Silk Road that connects Europe with Asia