



# In this issue

- |    |                   |    |                         |
|----|-------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 01 | COVID-19 Response | 02 | CE-Operates             |
| 03 | CE-Invests        | 04 | CE-Ventures             |
| 05 | CE-Creates        | 06 | Corporate Citizenship   |
| 07 | Corporate Insight | 08 | Harvard Business Review |



# 01 | COVID-19 Response

## Our COVID-19 Response initiatives

Community support, social entrepreneurship and environmental stewardship have always been at the heart of our operational ethos. In unprecedented times, it is only right that we continue to do our part while also reaching out and spearheading initiatives that others can collaborate on, help scale up, or simply be inspired by.

It is in this spirit that we have been working closely with our subsidiaries, affiliates, and partner companies across a wide range of initiatives designed to 1) ensure the safety and wellbeing of our employees, and 2) support the community in various ways through initiatives designed to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At this time of need, it is imperative that we safeguard our employees and stand by our communities through procuring essential supplies, supporting frontline heroes, providing access to valuable resources and supporting the small business community.

Please join us in extending much-needed support to the community by collaborating with us on any of our projects or proposing new ideas of your own. You can email us at [ce@crescent.ae](mailto:ce@crescent.ae).

[Find out more.](#)



Health, safety & capacity building



CE-Operates: Resilient supply chains



CE-Ventures: Start-up funding & community support



CE-Creates: Gratitude for our frontline heroes



# 02 | CE-Operates

## Jubail Commercial Port welcomes maiden call from AG3 Service by THE Alliance

Gulf Stevedoring Contracting Company (GSCCO), part of the Gulftainer group of companies, announced that it has received the HYUNDAI TACOMA container vessel from the recently updated AG3 service of THE Alliance at the Jubail Commercial Port (JCP) in Saudi Arabia.

Through establishing a strategic new connection between JCP and Port Kelang in Malaysia, the AG3 Service further strengthens trade between Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, one of Saudi's biggest export markets, as well as key trade hubs across Asia, including Hong Kong, Singapore, Kaohsiung, and crucial markets in China. The service enables end users to benefit from direct weekly calls at JCP by dedicated vessels that boast a 6,350-TEU capacity on a weekly basis as part of THE Alliance network.



## Gulftainer's Port Khalid hosts a high-level US delegation

Gulftainer hosted a high-level US delegation led by H.E. Ambassador John Rakolta Jr, the US Ambassador to the UAE, at its Port Khalid in Sharjah in March.

Crescent Enterprises' CEO Badr Jafar, CE-Ventures' Director Tushar Singhvi, and Gulftainer's Chief Commercial Officer David Casey welcomed the delegates as they explored the global maritime industry and collaboration opportunities.



# 03 | CE-Invests

## Gama Aviation sells its US Air associate, wins \$2.5 million Software-as-a-Service contract

Global business aviation service provider Gama Aviation announced the sale of its US Air associate Gama Aviation Signature to Wheels Up. It also announced the win of a software-as-a-service (SaaS) contract by its global services subsidiary Airops Software Ltd in March.

As part of the sale, Gama Aviation will receive consideration of \$33m, which it intends to use to support its organic and acquisitive growth investments, further consolidating the fragmented business aviation market.

Commenting on the transaction, Marwan Khalek, Chief Executive of Gama Aviation, said: "We are pleased to announce the sale of our US Air associate. Strategically divesting minority investments simplifies our corporate and financial structure, allowing us to further reinvest in growing the Group's wholly owned subsidiaries in line with our strategic objectives."

Separately, the company said that the \$2.5 million, three-year SaaS contract with one of the world's largest business aircraft fleet operators represents the largest single deal yet signed by Airops.

The system went live, providing comprehensive fleet management, crew rostering, and maintenance planning capabilities to support large fleet operations.

"It is another example of our strategic organic investment into innovative services that simplify business aviation," concluded Khalek.



# Averda handles all medical waste from COVID-19 quarantine sites in South Africa

Waste management service provider Averda is currently carrying out the incineration for quarantine sites around South Africa, where suspected and confirmed coronavirus patients are quarantined in dedicated healthcare facilities.

The company's healthcare incinerator in Klerksdorp, in the Northwest of South Africa, has the capacity to incinerate up to 28 tonnes of waste per day, more than twice that of other incineration facilities in the country.

The quarantine sites work with waste management experts such as Averda on the safe disposal of the highly infectious waste in line with the latest global standard operating procedures (SOPs). The waste is first packaged in multiple layers of thick plastic and boxes, and then sterilised twice before being transported by assigned vehicles to one of eight hazardous waste sites around the country.

The vehicle is tracked by GPS as it travels to the incinerator site and is not permitted to stop en-route. The receiving team is notified of the vehicle's arrival in advance and incinerator staff clear the loading bay of people. Only a small number of specialist staff stay on hand in full personal protective equipment suits to unlock and offload the cargo, which is immediately incinerated.

The process that Averda has established at the Klerksdorp site for dealing with such cases is based on the company's previously established standards in preparation for Ebola and Congo fever. Averda was also responsible for the incineration of most waste related to the listeriosis outbreak of 2018.

"We have handled waste like this on numerous occasions, with the same SOPs as we are using for COVID-19. We are in communication with the Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Affairs, to which we report on a monthly basis offering advice and training if and when they are setting up new quarantine sites," said Thashnee Budram, General Manager, Healthcare Sector - Averda South Africa.



**We have handled waste like this on numerous occasions, with the same SOPs as we are using for COVID-19.**

- Thashnee Budram, General Manager,  
Healthcare Sector - Averda South Africa



# 04 | CE-Ventures

## Vicarious pursues its own path in AI



Vicarious is pursuing its own approach to artificial intelligence (AI) by developing software that makes industrial robots smart enough to perform jobs previously done exclusively by humans.

The start-up's software combines deep learning with other AI algorithms to enable robots to intuit the cause of events and handle situations outside their past experience, conferring them unprecedented flexibility.

Vicarious buys standard industrial robots, enhances them with its software, and contracts them to accomplish tasks on behalf of clients, charging per job completed or at an hourly basis. In Baltimore, Vicarious robots assemble sampler packs for makeup company Sephora.

Since inception in 2010, the start-up has raised more than \$130 million in funding, including funds from CE-Ventures and billionaire entrepreneurs Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, and Jeff Bezos.



## Furlenco raises \$10 million from existing investors

Online furniture rental company Furlenco has closed a \$10 million funding round led by its existing cohort of investors. Following this funding round, Furlenco has become valued at \$125 million.

Founder Ajith Mohan Karimpana, who is former Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley executive, said: "Furlenco is already operationally profitable and this round will further help us progress on our goal of becoming fully profitable in the next 12-18 months."

"While the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has definitely impacted all of us, Furlenco's subscription business model with monthly recurring revenue allows us to be a lot more resilient than many of the other startups who are seeing their monthly revenues plummet significantly," Karimpana said.

Furlenco has so far served around 110,000 customers.



## Wamda Capital leads seed funding for Aanaab

Jeddah-based online teacher training platform start-up Aanaab raised \$1.5 million in seed funding in a first external investment round led by Wamda Capital, Nour Nouf Knowledge Company, and education tech angel investors in March.

Aanaab, which launched in 2016 to help upskill Arab educators and learning institutions through online lectures, meetings, reading materials, discussion boards, and evaluation exercises, intends to use the funds to further its expansion.



"Aanaab is looking to develop initiatives similar to global models such as the Singaporean model, which encourages teachers to get 100 hours of professional development annually. This keeps them up to date with the latest developments in their field and improves their classroom practices through professional learning communities," said Naila AlKhalawi, Aanaab Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer.

The start-up has over 37,000 teachers enrolled and boasts a course completion rate of 28%, or double the average global rate for other open education platforms. It has collaborated with various government and non-government organisations in Saudi Arabia to train more than 1,500 educators.



# From coast to kitchen: How FreshToHome delivers fresh fish



E-commerce start-up FreshToHome delivers fresh produce to customers in India and the UAE thanks to its proprietary AI technology, including its fishermen's app.

The app is in the fishermen's native language, and follows an interactive easy-to-use model, where a supplier scans their daily catch through the app's camera, which detects the variety and size of the fish. The fisherman then places their bid based on the latter data. At the other end, one or two salesmen bid at auctions, pick up the catch, and transport it through the cold chain to respective hubs.

The company has partnered with 1,500 fishermen across 150 coasts and has about 40 collection centres at harbours to date in India. Since it manages its own transportation, it can ensure that chemicals are not added to the produce.



CE-Ventures led the Series A funding round and invested in the Series B funding round of FreshToHome.

# 05

# CE-Creates

## Shamal set to upgrade GCC labourers' outfits with high-tech industrial clothing line

Through its upcoming line of high-tech industrial clothing, CE-Creates' start-up Shamal is set to enhance the safety and comfort of outdoors labourers in the GCC, where temperatures can exceed 45 degrees Celsius during summer.



Shamal designed its outfits to protect the region's construction workers and other labourers from heat and humidity. Compared to traditional outfits, Shamal offers significant reduction in garment weight and improved thermal comfort, featuring technical fabrics developed by Coolmax, 3M, and Cordura.





## Kava & Chai now delivers via Deliveroo, Talabat, Uber Eats, Zomato

Specialty tea and coffeehouse Kava & Chai has commenced delivery of its signature food and beverage line through online food delivery platforms Deliveroo, Talabat, Uber Eats, and Zomato, covering multiple areas in Dubai around its current locations.

The initiative will bring the brand's specialty coffee, premium tea, and wide range of salads, sandwiches, desserts to the doorstep of customers across Dubai.

Beverages will be delivered in coffee and tea flasks of various sizes for customers to enjoy them hot from the comfort of their homes or offices. The offering will also feature a select line of manual coffee brews, including V60 and Chemex, as well as Kava & Chai's signature retail coffee beans.



## ION primed to get on a fast charge

Green mobility start-up ION aims to promote sustainable transport solutions in the region to help curb carbon emissions in the sector, which accounts for 30% of total emissions worldwide.

The company has been closely working with regulators in the UAE to make commercial electric vehicles (EV) more viable and is working with the Sharjah City Municipality and Sharjah Electricity and Water Authority to supply, install, and operate public EV charging stations across the emirate.

ION is also collaborating with French company NAVYA to operate and maintain its electric and autonomous shuttles, while continuing to offer sustainable ride-hailing solutions through its partnership with Careem.





# 06 | Corporate Citizenship

## Crescent Enterprises supports Gaza Sky Geek's first virtual hackathon

To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on essential sectors such as health and education, we pledged \$10,000 in prize money to support Gaza Sky Geek's first virtual hackathon in Palestine during April. Over 1,000 participants across 134 teams took part in the hackathon, which raised \$26,000 in total prize money.

Congratulations to the three winning teams, namely:

- **Heros Game:** a mobile game that provides children with safety instructions, helps them feel better about staying at home and entertains them.
- **Ya Saydali:** a mobile app that aims to deliver medicine from the nearest pharmacy to a patient's doorstep.
- **Hakini:** an online platform that facilitates the provision of therapy for people suffering from mental health disorders during and post COVID-19.

As a strategic partner, we are also providing participants and members of the organisation with mentorship, a webinar on economic resilience, and a 100 complimentary subscriptions to Harvard Business Review (HBR) Arabia.

In partnership with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and UNFPA, the virtual hackathon gathered the brightest minds to develop solutions for health and education challenges caused by COVID-19.

A Google for Startups tech hub partner, Gaza Sky Geeks represents the leading co-working space, start-up accelerator, and technology education hub in Gaza.



# 07 | Corporate Insight

## An ancient roadmap for a new golden age

In his latest blog, our CEO Badr Jafar emphasises the strategic and economic benefits of embracing diversity and inclusion across all sectors as the UAE gears up for business, scientific, and cultural innovation in preparation for the next 50 years.

**“Without a parallel commitment to real inclusion that actively engages people of different personal and professional backgrounds and rewards them equally for their contributions, the potential benefits of diversity will be squandered.”**

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- Badr Jafar, CEO,  
Crescent Enterprises

Click [here](#) to read the full article.

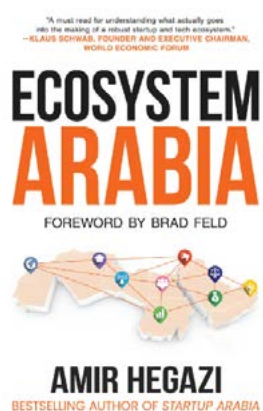


# Raising a generation of globally minded entrepreneurs

In a new book titled Ecosystem Arabia, our CEO Badr Jafar discusses the importance of raising a generation of globally minded entrepreneurs and combining business with social purpose.

**I would like to stress the importance of having a clearly defined social purpose behind any business, large or small, and creating business models that identify and address intrinsic human needs. If you can do that, then by definition you will have a fantastic commercial opportunity because you're addressing a real need and therefore providing real value**

- Badr Jafar,  
CEO, Crescent Enterprises



Ecosystem Arabia provides very useful insights as well as serving as a practical guide for anyone serious about playing a more meaningful role nurturing the Middle East's startup community.

Read Badr's commentary in the [Ecosystem Arabia](#) book, in pages 20, 125, 171, 187, 216, 221, 245, 300, 313, 329, 349, 409 & 480.

# SAP powers Crescent Enterprises' digital transformation

Crescent Enterprises has chosen European multinational software corporation SAP as a strategic partner to power its drive to improve efficiency across all processes and progress a digital transformation strategy in the coming years.



In partnership with SAP Digital Business Services, Crescent Enterprises implemented the S/4HANA real-time business suite and the SuccessFactors talent management suite to help streamline its operations and gain real-time operational insights, integrated asset management, and upskill talent.

Crescent Enterprises achieved the implementation in a record time of eight months, ahead of schedule. The company now operates on a single integrated digital platform and has introduced online transaction processing to eliminate unnecessary paperwork.



# 08

## Harvard Business Review

### How to succeed when you have a big shoes to fill

Crescent Enterprises expanded its strategic partnership with Harvard Business Review (HBR) Arabia to support its Renaissance Partners programme, which provides Arabic readers with quality business content regardless of their means or spending priorities.

Through its support to HBR Arabia's Renaissance Partners programme, Crescent Enterprises helps empower the entrepreneurs of its community partners Sheraa, NAMA Women Advancement Establishment, and Al Ahli CSR in Action.

- View the above article in Arabic [here](#).
- Learn about HBR Arabia's Renaissance Partners programme and gift subscriptions [here](#).





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