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From Pearl Boats to Mars in 50 Years: Leaders Convene to Recognise the UAE's Resilience and Build for the Next 50

Business leaders convened in Dubai for one of the largest private-sector gatherings held since the start of the Iran conflict. The Briefing by Arabian Business event brought together senior decision-makers across finance, aviation, tourism, technology, retail, and investment to discuss business resilience, regional growth, and the future of the UAE economy.

Opening the event, H.E. Badr Jafar, as Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Business and Philanthropy and CEO of Crescent Enterprises, delivered a keynote address on enterprise, national resilience, and purpose-led leadership. Reflecting on the UAE's progress over the past 50 years, he challenged business leaders to imagine – and help build – the next 50 with the same ambition.

The address centred on three defining dates in the UAE's journey. The first was 2 December 1971, the founding of the UAE, which he described as "the most ambitious start-up ever seen". He reflected on the entrepreneurial spirit, institutional imagination, and resilience embedded in the country from the beginning, noting that the UAE's success was never accidental. "Resilience here is never improvised," he said. "It is by design."

The second date highlighted was 28 February 2026, the start of the Iran conflict and one of the most severe stress tests of the UAE's national character. He noted that ports, schools, hospitals, industry, infrastructure, and daily life were placed under pressure – yet continued to function. "It wasn't just our infrastructure that was tested; our ideals were as well," he said, highlighting how businesses, residents, communities, and institutions responded with continuity, confidence, and cohesion.

Even under pressure, the UAE's economic momentum continued. H.E. Badr Jafar pointed to the latest edition of Make it in the Emirates, where more than 200 new agreements valued at nearly US$50 billion were signed, and to the country's expanding trade network connecting UAE businesses to markets representing around three billion people across Asia, Africa, and Europe. The third date highlighted was 2 December 2071, when the UAE will mark its centenary. Looking ahead, he pointed to artificial intelligence being deployed across industries, UAE-backed projects in space, and the nation's growing role as a crossroads not only for trade, but for ideas, talent, science, and innovation.

"In 50 years, we went from pearl boats to Mars," he said. "The next 50 years are not built in 2071. They are built now – in the decisions of this year, and the next."

Read more: H.E. Badr Jafar keynote opens business leaders event

‘What We Can Build Together is Greater Than the Sum of Us’ Emerges as a Key Takeaway from Investopia Europe 2026

H.E. Badr Jafar delivered a keynote address at Investopia Europe in Milan, setting out a clear challenge for global business leaders: capital must be measured not only by what it earns, but by what it builds, whom it lifts, and what it leaves behind. Held at Palazzo Mezzanotte, the historic headquarters of the Italian Stock Exchange, Investopia Milan convened nearly 700 officials, ministers, executives, and investors from the UAE, Italy, Europe, and Africa. Organised through the joint efforts of the UAE Ministry of Investment and the Ministry of Economy and Tourism, the gathering focused on strengthening investment corridors and translating strategic partnerships into bankable opportunities.

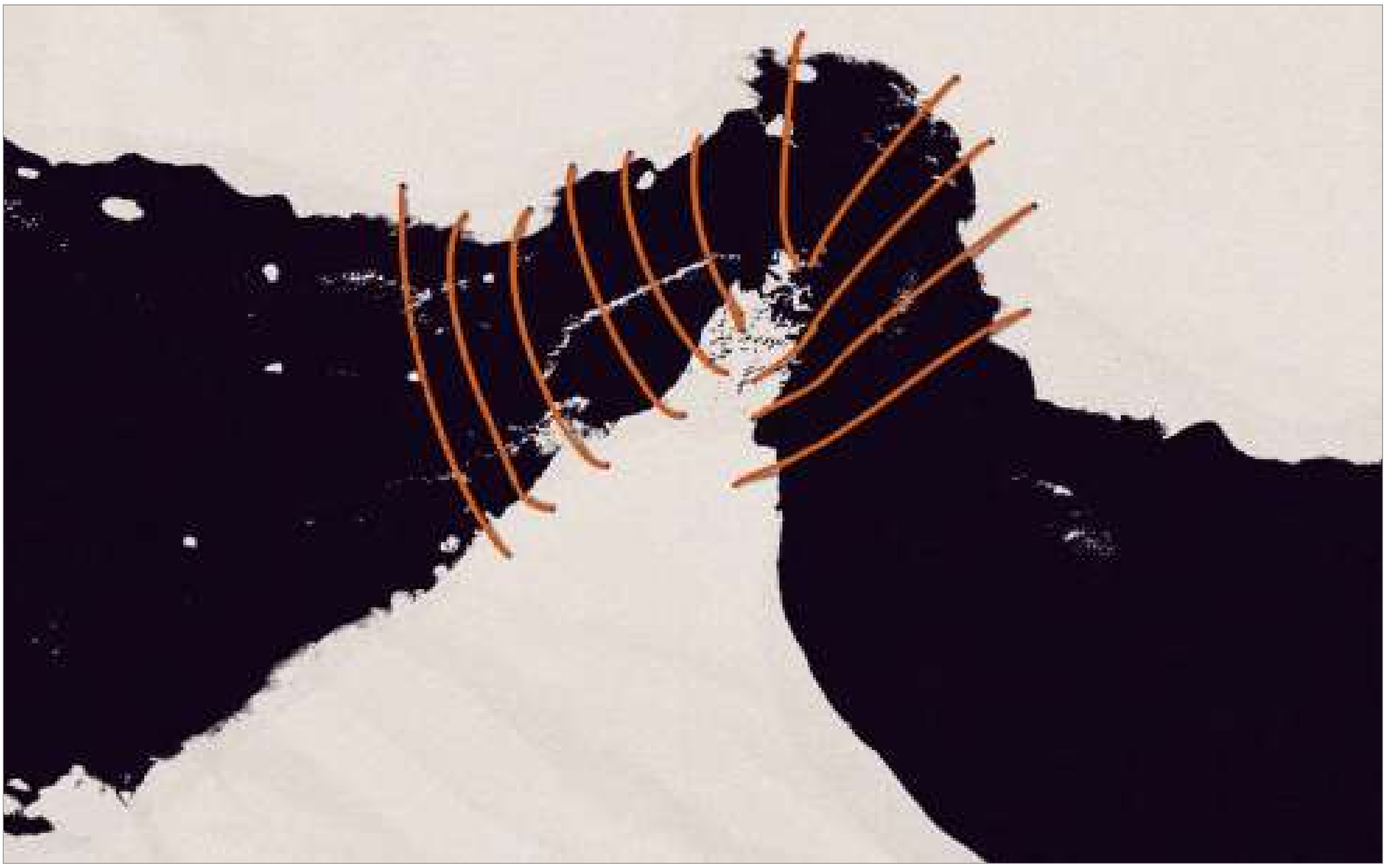
Together with H.E. Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan Al Nahyan, Minister of State, H.E. Badr Jafar co-hosted a roundtable with senior Italian and Emirati business leaders. The discussion focused on where the UAE–Italy partnership can help multiply private capital into priority African markets, particularly across energy, logistics, food systems, digital infrastructure, and industrial capacity. The central theme was practical collaboration. Italy brings industrial depth, family enterprise, engineering capability, and craft. The UAE brings capital, connectivity, execution platforms, and access to high-growth markets. Combined with African partners from the outset, these strengths can support projects that are commercially viable, scalable, and locally rooted.

Across meetings with senior counterparts from the Italian Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy, the Prime Minister’s Office, Intesa Sanpaolo, Borsa Italiana / Euronext, The National Chamber for Italian Fashion, and Altagamma, one message was consistent: the UAE–Italy relationship is entering its most operational chapter yet. Conversations were not simply about shared ambition, but about where to build, where to scale, and where combined strengths are most commercially relevant.

In his remarks, H.E. Badr Jafar placed the modern partnership within a longer historical arc, recalling that in 1590 Venetian jeweller Gasparo Balbi sailed Gulf waters in search of pearls. “Italians have known us by name for more than four hundred years,” he noted. “What we build together now is the continuation of an old conversation, not the invention of a new one.” That depth of connection is increasingly visible in the numbers. By the end of the first quarter of 2026, nearly 4,900 Italian companies were operating in the UAE, a 37 per cent increase on the same period a year earlier. As H.E. Badr Jafar observed, the opportunity ahead lies in economic corridors that connect industrial capability with investment, innovation with execution, and shared ambition with long-term opportunity. The takeaway from Milan was clear: capital is rarely the constraint; the constraint is structure – and what the UAE and Italy can build together is greater than the sum of their parts.

Read more: H.E. Badr Jafar | Keynote at Investopia Milan

DIE ZEIT Interview Highlights UAE Resilience and the Shift from Efficiency to Optionality



In an interview with German newspaper DIE ZEIT, H.E. Badr Jafar, UAE Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Business and Philanthropy and CEO of Crescent Enterprises, reflected on the UAE's resilience as a global hub for trade, investment, and connectivity at a time of heightened disruption.

Speaking amid serious pressure on international trade routes and vital waterways, H.E. Badr Jafar emphasised that trade is a global public good – and that no single actor should be allowed to hold critical corridors hostage. The moment, he noted, is not only a regional concern, but a global one, with implications for energy flows, food security, supply chains, and vulnerable communities around the world.

Against this backdrop, the UAE has demonstrated its ability to remain open, liquid, and functional under pressure. "I believe that will be a major competitive advantage – under a serious stress test there were short-term disruptions, yes. But in the long run, capital concentrates precisely where resilience has been demonstrated." he said.

He pointed to the country's long-term planning as a key source of strength. The UAE's resilience is supported not only by geography, including an extensive coastline beyond current bottlenecks, but also by decades of investment in infrastructure, diversification, and financial buffers. Sovereign wealth funds of approximately US$2.5 trillion, foreign exchange reserves of over US$300 billion, and bank deposits of around US$1.5 trillion provide crisis buffers that few economies can match. Today, 77 per cent of the UAE's GDP is generated outside oil and gas, reflecting the depth of its diversification.

A central theme of the interview was the need to move beyond efficiency alone toward "optionality". For years, global supply chains were optimised for cost and speed. This crisis has shown that resilience now depends on diversified routes, suppliers, partnerships, markets, and sectors.

That adaptation is already visible. Ports such as Khor Fakkan on the UAE's east coast are handling significantly increased volumes, cross-border goods flows within the Gulf have multiplied, and Etihad Rail is managing several times its normal volume. As H.E. Badr Jafar noted, infrastructure should be judged not only by how efficiently it functions in normal times, but by how reliably it adapts in exceptional circumstances.

He also highlighted the strength of coordination across government, business, and civil society. "Resilience comes from the network, not from a single thread," he said.

Crescent Enterprises Highlights the Role of Ecosystems in Building Founder Resilience

Tushar Singhvi, Deputy CEO and Head of Investments at Crescent Enterprises, was featured in an interview with the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Center (Sheraa), reflecting on the role of ecosystem support in helping founders navigate uncertainty and build sustainable businesses.

Commenting on the conviction that resilient economies are built by resilient entrepreneurs, and emphasising Crescent Enterprises' commitment to continue to support initiatives that empower founders to navigate challenges and build sustainable businesses. "No startup succeeds alone, it takes capital, mentorship, and access to markets," Tushar Singhvi said. "Partnerships that bring these together help founders build businesses to last."

Sheraa's Entrepreneurs Resilience Fund, which Crescent Enterprises has supported, reflects the importance of providing founders with the support they need to continue building, innovating, and growing through periods of uncertainty. The fund provides targeted financial, operational, and marketing support to entrepreneurs, helping them navigate current market conditions, maintain operations, and build long-term sustainability.

The fund offers equity-free, non-repayable grants alongside a structured support programme of advisory sessions, workshops, business introductions, and ac-cess to partner-led resources and tools, with particular emphasis on sectors essential to economic stability, including manufacturing, food security, and healthcare.

Tushar Singhvi emphasised that entrepreneurship thrives through access to capital, mentorship, and meaningful opportunities, this contribution reinforces a shared vision of creating an ecosystem where ambitious founders can build businesses designed to endure and create lasting impact. To-gether, we are strengthening the support systems that empower entrepreneurs to navigate chal-lenges, unlock growth, and shape the future of the region.

"At Crescent Enterprises, we've seen over decades that every period of uncertainty creates the next generation of great businesses. Supporting founders through moments like this is exactly how you build a stronger, more resilient economy. Resilience isn't built in good times – it's built in moments like this. We're proud to be long-term supporters of the entrepreneurial ecosystem here. Each time the UAE has faced disruption, it has emerged stronger, more connected, and more important to the world."

"Resilient businesses are built through ecosystems, not in isolation. Sharjah and the UAE offer such strong institutional support, a founder-friendly policy environment, and platforms and initiatives like Sheraa's Entrepreneur Resilience Fund which make it one of the region's most compelling startup ecosystems in the world."

Gulftainer Partnership with Borouge Expands UAE Export Gateways and Industrial Resilience

Gulftainer has signed a strategic partnership with Borouge Plc to strengthen export gateway access, supply chain efficiency, and logistics resilience for one of the UAE's leading industrial companies. Signed at Make it in the Emirates 2026 by Farid Belbouab, Group CEO of Gulftainer, and Hazeem Sultan Al Suwaidi, CEO of Borouge, the agreement forms part of a broader series of strategic partnerships which are expanding Borouge's access to diversified export gateways.

Under the partnership, Borouge will secure access to Khorfakkan Port, Gulftainer's strategically located East Coast gateway. This provides Borouge with alternative and less congested export routes, enabling faster vessel access, greater routing flexibility, and reduced dependency on existing logistics channels. Gulftainer Shipping will also manage Borouge's inland supply chain volumes, ensuring coordinated movement between inland transport and port operations. The integration is designed to improve visibility, reduce turnaround times, support higher throughput, and enhance overall export network operational efficiency.

The agreement reflects the growing importance of resilient, multi-gateway logistics infrastructure for the UAE's critical industries. By combining port access, inland transport, and coordinated cargo handling, the partnership supports Borouge's ability to maintain reliable and consistent supply flows to global customers, even during periods of market or supply chain disruption.

Commenting on the wider series of logistics agreements, Hazeem Sultan Al Suwaidi said: "By building a flexible, multi-modal logistics network anchored in the UAE, in close collaboration with our trusted national partners, we are enhancing our ability to serve customers with greater reliability and efficiency, while expanding access to multiple export gateways. This ensures continuity of supply and solidifies our position as a reliable global supplier, while contributing to the UAE's industrial growth through stronger local partnerships."

For Gulftainer, the agreement highlights the strategic role of Khorfakkan Port and the UAE's East Coast infrastructure in supporting industrial resilience, trade continuity, and more flexible access to international markets. Together, the partnership marks a practical step in turning logistics strategy into supply chain strength – reinforcing the UAE's position as a global trade hub built not only for efficiency, but for resilience, scalability, and continuity.

Gulftainer

Gulftainer Group, established in Sharjah in 1976, is a leading operator of regional ports and terminals, and a trusted provider of customised supply chain and logistics solutions: gulftainer.com

Gulftainer Unveils UAE's Largest Trade Corridor to Strengthen GCC and Global Supply Chains

Gulftainer has unveiled Al Dhaid Multi-Modal Trade Corridor as a landmark 150-hectare logistics hub designed to strengthen Sharjah's role as a strategic gateway for regional and global trade. With planned annual capacity of 1.5 million TEUs, the development is set to become a major inland logistics platform connecting the UAE's East Coast with the wider GCC. Located just 50 kilometres from Khorfakkan Port, the corridor is being engineered as a capacity extension of the port, linking deep-water access with inland freight movement and future rail connectivity.

Planned as a state-of-the-art, ESG-ready, and fully digitalised logistics ecosystem, it will support a more seamless movement of goods across sea, road, and rail. The project is being developed in partnership with the Sharjah Ports, Customs and Free Zones Authority, reflecting Sharjah's continued focus on strengthening supply chain efficiency and trade infrastructure.

Farid Belbouab, Group CEO of Gulftainer, said: "The Al Dhaid Multi-Modal Trade Corridor is set to become more than just a development; it is a vital economic engine for the Emirate of Sharjah, the UAE and the GCC. By combining Khorfakkan Port's deep-water access with Etihad Rail's freight power, and backing it with world-class digital and ESG-ready infrastructure, Gulftainer is shaping the region's new Middle East trade corridor."

The hub will include an Inland Container Yard, Empty Depot, and high-velocity Container Freight Station, enabling cargo to be consolidated inland before same-day shuttle movement to the port. Planned integration with Etihad Rail will further support high-capacity freight movement into Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the wider Arabian Peninsula.

For manufacturers, distributors, and logistics partners, the corridor is designed to improve first- and last-mile efficiency, reduce inland drayage costs, and provide greater routing resilience. Its planned "single-window" clearance environment will also support faster processing and more efficient regional trade flows.

Farid Belbouab added: "We are providing global manufacturers and distributors with a robust ecosystem that offers unmatched agility, derisked routing, and profound cost efficiencies. This facility will be where resilience meets innovation, anchoring global shipping volumes to our shores and creating permanent,

Gulftainer Group, established in Sharjah in 1976, is a leading operator of regional ports and terminals, and a trusted provider of customised supply chain and logistics solutions: gulftainer.com

Gulftainer Deepens Partnerships to Strengthen Sharjah’s Global Trade Connectivity

Gulftainer has recently convened a series of high-level engagements across Sharjah and Shanghai, reinforcing its role in strengthening regional logistics resilience and expanding global trade connectivity.

Farid Belbouab, Group CEO of Gulftainer, had the honour of meeting His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, during a visit to the Sharjah Maritime Academy. Attended by Sheikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Qasimi, Chairman of the Sharjah Ports, Customs and Free Zones Authority, the meeting reflected the growing importance of Sharjah’s maritime and logistics ecosystem, and Gulftainer’s continued commitment to supporting the Emirate’s long-term vision for trade, connectivity, and supply chain resilience.

Building on this alignment, Gulftainer also convened a focused business briefing with more than 50 global shipping lines and partners. The session moved the conversation from response to readiness, highlighting the company’s focus on operational performance, customer-led solutions, and scalable infrastructure that keeps trade moving through periods of disruption. Central to this vision is Khorfakkan, now firmly established as a high-performing East Coast gateway supporting regional and global trade.

Gulftainer also hosted two engagements in Shanghai, bringing together Chinese partners, cargo owners, manufacturers, and logistics leaders to advance connectivity between China, the UAE, and the wider Middle East. The gatherings, including a larger session with more than 100 senior stakeholders, underscored rising demand for integrated logistics solutions across East-West trade corridors.

These engagements reflect Gulftainer’s partnership-driven approach to building resilient, future-ready gateways that connect markets and enable global trade.

Gulftainer Group, established in Sharjah in 1976, is a leading operator of regional ports and terminals, and a trusted provider of customised supply chain and logistics solutions: gulftainer.com

Gama Aviation’s Sharjah Business Aviation Centre Named World’s Best Fixed Base Operator

CE-Invests portfolio company Gama Aviation has been named Fixed Base Operator (FBO) of the Year for its Business Aviation Centre in Sharjah at the Aviation Achievement Awards 2026, organised by MEA Business Magazine.

The award, received in Dubai, recognises the strength of Gama Aviation’s Sharjah operation and marks an important milestone for the wider Gama Aviation Group as it continues to expand its presence in the UAE’s business aviation sector.

The recognition follows the opening of Gama Aviation’s purpose-built Business Aviation Centre at Sharjah International Airport, representing an investment of more than US$60 million in the UAE’s business aviation infrastructure. The 80,000 sqm facility offers zero slot restrictions, a fully self-manoeuvring apron, dedicated fuelling services, rapid taxi times to the runway, and one of the UAE’s largest air-conditioned business aviation hangars at more than 12,000 sqm.

Together, these capabilities position Sharjah as a compelling gateway for business aviation operators seeking efficient access to Dubai and the Northern Emirates, supported by dedicated, high-quality ground infrastructure.

Tom Murphy, Managing Director, FBO Services at Gama Aviation, said: “We were honoured to be shortlisted alongside some of the region’s leading aviation organisations, so to be announced as the winner on the night was an incredibly proud moment. This award reflects the ambition of the group through investment and development of what will be key infrastructure in the UAE for the business jet market, and the dedication of our colleagues across the UAE and the UK whose commitment to delivering exceptional client experiences makes achievements like this possible.”

He also thanked the Sharjah Airport Authority and the Department of Civil Aviation for their continued support and partnership.

The award reflects not only the quality of the facility, but the expertise and dedication of the teams delivering operational excellence and high standards of service for operators, passengers, and crew.

Gama Aviation

Gama Aviation provides business aviation, special mission, and technology and outsourcing services to blue-chip corporations, government agencies, healthcare trusts, and private individuals across the world: gamaaviation.com

CRESCENT ENTERPRISES
INVESTS

CE-Invests Portfolio Company Flipspaces Expands Global Footprint with Major New Mandates

CE-Invests portfolio company Flipspaces has secured new global design and build mandates worth more than US$23 million, spanning over 130,000 square feet across India, the UAE, and the United States. The wins mark another milestone in Flipspaces' growth as a technology-led interior design and build company, reflecting rising demand from global brands seeking faster, more transparent, and more predictable service execution across multiple markets.

The new mandates span logistics, AI engineering, enterprise workspaces, food and beverage, and commercial real estate. Clients include UAE-based port operator Gulftainer, US-headquartered AI engineering firm Ascendion, Taco Bell in California, Lollipop Holdings in Connecticut, and Isprava in Mumbai.

In the UAE, Flipspaces recently completed its first Dubai project for ICICI Prudential AMC at the Dubai International Financial Centre, marking a significant step in the company's regional expansion. It has also secured a 25,000 square foot office mandate for Gulftainer in Sharjah. In India, Flipspaces deepened its relationship with Ascendion through repeat mandates, including a 56,000 square foot office expansion in Vadodara and a 34,000 square foot project in Chennai.

Commenting on the new wins, Kunal Sharma, Founder and CEO of Flipspaces, said: "These new global mandates validate the growing trust enterprises are placing in Flipspaces to deliver at scale across geographies. Our expansion into markets like the UAE and the US, alongside complex project execution in India, reflects how our technology-led approach and execution capabilities are resonating with enterprises seeking a trusted global partner that can deliver with greater speed, transparency, and predictability across the entire design and build process."

The company has also strengthened its leadership and enterprise delivery teams with strategic hires across India, the UAE, and the US. Flipspaces' expansion is underpinned by Vizworld, its proprietary platform that combines design visualisation, spatial planning, procurement, and execution into a single ecosystem. The platform enables faster decision-making, improved cost predictability, and seamless delivery across markets. The latest mandates support Flipspaces' FY26–FY27 growth strategy, focused on increasing global revenue contribution and scaling its AI-integrated design and build platform across key international markets.

Read more: [Flipspaces secures new global mandates]

FLIPSPACES Flipspaces offers end-to-end design and build solutions for commercial spaces through its proprietary technology platform integrating interior design, a market-driven supply chain, and comprehensive project management: flipspaces.com

CRESCENT ENTERPRISES
VENTURES

Cohesity Expands Middle East Technical Leadership to Support Rising Cyber Resilience Demand

Cohesity, a CE-Ventures portfolio company and leader in AI-powered data security, has announced a series of strategic technical appointments across the Middle East, reinforcing its investment in the region and its commitment to supporting organisations in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and beyond.

The new hires comprise Murad Abu Abed as AI Field Technical Director, Ayman Hammoudeh as Senior Director, Sales Engineering and Field CISO, Mazin Bayado as Technical Leader for the UAE and Rest of Gulf Countries, and Mohammed Almulla as Technical Leader for Saudi Arabia.

The expansion comes as organisations across the region navigate an increasingly complex threat landscape alongside rapid digital transformation, driving demand for cyber resilience, data protection, and secure AI adoption.
Cohesity's relevance to that shift was reinforced earlier this year when it received the 2026 Google Cloud Partner of the Year Award for Infrastructure Modernisation, recognition of joint work to help enterprises recover quickly from cyberattacks without reintroducing hidden threats.

Formed through the merger of Cohesity and Veritas' data protection business, the company today protects data for a substantial share of the world's largest enterprises across on-premises, cloud, SaaS, and hybrid environments.

Gregg Petersen, Regional Director for the Middle East at Cohesity, said: "The Middle East continues to be a strategic growth market for Cohesity, as organisations place increasing emphasis on cyber resilience, data security, and AI-driven innovation. By expanding our technical and security leadership, we are enhancing our ability to support customers with local expertise, deliver advanced data protection capabilities, and help organisations recover quickly and confidently in the face of disruption."

Collectively, the appointments bring deep regional expertise across data protection, cyber resilience, hybrid cloud architectures, and AI-driven security, positioning Cohesity to support enterprises as they move beyond traditional backup towards a more comprehensive, resilience-driven approach to data security.

Read more: [Cohesity Strengthens its Technical Team in the Region]

COHESITY Cohesity is a leader in AI-powered data security, helping organisations strengthen resilience and accelerate recovery across cloud and hybrid environments: cohesity.com

Solace Health Featured in BBC StoryWorks Series on Reimagining Healthcare for an Aging World

CE-Ventures portfolio company Solace Health has been featured in Age Reimagined, a new BBC series presented by the Global Coalition on Aging. The series explores how individuals and organisations are responding to one of the defining demographic shifts of our time: a rapidly aging global population. By mid-century, the number of people over 55 is expected to double to two billion, and for the first time in history older adults will outnumber the young. Ensuring that health spans rise alongside lifespans will require healthcare systems that are easier to navigate, more personalised, and more human.

Solace Health addresses one of the most persistent gaps in the US healthcare system: the burden placed on patients and families to coordinate complex care alone. Through its HIPAA-compliant platform, Solace pairs patients with dedicated healthcare advocates who help manage appointments, insurance, care coordination, logistics, and communication across the healthcare journey.

The Age Reimagined feature brings that mission to life through the story of Jose Madera, who spent more than a decade living with unexplained symptoms before being connected with Victoria Ibrahim, a patient advocate and former paediatric nurse. Ibrahim helped arrange specialist appointments, secure support for housing and transportation, and navigate the system toward a long-awaited Parkinson's diagnosis.

"It feels very different having someone that can navigate the system. Not being out at sea, trying to figure it out on our own. That's really powerful," said Jessica Sellars, Madera's partner, who is now also supported by Ibrahim Solace was co-founded in 2022 by Jeremy Gurewitz after his mother, a radiologist, struggled to navigate her own cancer diagnosis despite her medical background. Since then, the platform has supported tens of thousands of patients, caregivers, and families through experienced advocates who bring an average of 16 years in the field.

"Patients and advocates are at the core of everything that we do. We want to bring humanity back to healthcare," said Gurewitz, CEO and co-founder of Solace Health. The feature highlights Solace's growing role in making healthcare navigation more accessible, compassionate, and effective for patients and families.

Solace

Solace Health is a digital platform that connects patients with expert healthcare advocates who navigate the healthcare system on their behalf, improving outcomes and reducing costs. platform: solace.health

Mesh Partners with Kalshi to Power Secure Crypto Deposits and Payouts

CE-Ventures portfolio company Mesh has announced a strategic partnership with Kalshi, the first federally regulated prediction market, to streamline crypto deposits and payouts for Kalshi's rapidly growing global user base. The partnership enables seamless crypto connectivity for an international community of traders. Through the integration, Kalshi users can fund their accounts with cryptocurrency from more than 300 wallets and exchanges, including Coinbase, Binance, MetaMask, and Phantom, in just a few taps.

The integration is designed to make crypto transactions faster, safer, and more reliable for users worldwide. Mesh's smart asset routing automatically selects the correct network for each deposit, helping reduce the risk of funds being sent through the wrong chain. The platform also provides programmatic, real-time address validation for payouts, adding another layer of security and reliability across transactions.

The partnership reinforces Mesh's role as a trusted payments network for the digital asset ecosystem, supporting secure, compliant, and scalable crypto movement across global markets. Prediction markets continue to move into the mainstream, the sector has recorded 4.3 times growth in trading volume over the past year, while Kalshi processed a historic US$5.8 billion in monthly volume in late 2025. Mesh, meanwhile, reached a US$1 billion valuation after closing a US$75 million Series C earlier in the year, reflecting growing investor confidence in infrastructure that connects wallets, exchanges, and digital assets through a unified payments layer.

"Crypto-native traders are the most active participants in any market they touch. Higher volume, stronger engagement, deeper liquidity. The barrier has never been interest, it's been infrastructure. Mesh fixes that," said John Wang, Head of Crypto at Kalshi.

Bam Azizi, Co-Founder and CEO of Mesh, noted that as financial markets move toward tokenisation, fragmentation across wallets, exchanges, and assets remains a major challenge. By connecting regulated markets directly to global crypto liquidity, Mesh is helping build the infrastructure layer needed for the next phase of digital finance.

MESH

Mesh is building the world's first global payment network for digital assets. By unifying fragmented crypto infrastructure into a single interoperable network, Mesh is laying the foundation for an open, connected, and secure digital finance ecosystem: meshpay.com

CRESCENT ENTERPRISES VENTURES

Applied Intuition Expands Physical AI into Quarry Autonomy with Heidelberg Materials

CE-Ventures portfolio company Applied Intuition has announced a collaboration with Heidelberg Materials, one of the world's largest integrated manufacturers of building materials, to deploy autonomous haulage systems across quarry operations, beginning at a site in Australia. The collaboration brings intelligent, vehicle-based autonomy to industrial environments and supports a new operating model for construction and mining operations. Applied Intuition will provide its Self-Driving System for Construction to enable autonomous haulage across Heidelberg's fleet of construction and mining vehicles.

Following successful completion of the initial deployment, the project is expected to support the expansion of autonomous operations across Heidelberg's wider Australian network. The collaboration challenges the standard model for industrial autonomy. While autonomous haulage solutions have traditionally focused on the largest quarry and mining sites, Applied's system is designed to support smaller operations as well, including sites running just two 40-ton trucks. This makes the platform adaptable across facilities of different sizes, layouts, constraints, and infrastructure profiles.

"No two quarry or construction sites operate the same way, with different layouts, constraints and economics," said Qasar Younis, Co-Founder and CEO of Applied Intuition. "We've built our platform to adapt to that reality. This partnership shows we can take the same core system used in large mining operations and apply it to smaller, infrastructure-constrained quarry sites, scaling it across hundreds of unique locations."

The system operates directly on the vehicle, with integrated perception, decision-making, and safety capabilities onboard. This enables reliable autonomous operation without requiring constant connectivity or heavy site infrastructure, helping reduce barriers to deployment across complex industrial environments. The collaboration builds on Applied's growing presence in construction and mining autonomy and reinforces its broader physical AI strategy. The same core platform is already being applied across trucking and defence, with learnings from each domain feeding continuous system improvements. By extending autonomous haulage to more varied environments, Applied is helping bring physical AI into practical industrial use cases with significant growth potential.

Applied Intuition

Applied Intuition is the vehicle intelligence company that delivers the toolchain, Vehicle OS and autonomy stacks to help customers build intelligent vehicles, shorten time to market, and accelerate the global adoption of safe, AI-driven machines: appliedintuition.com

CRESCENT ENTERPRISES VENTURES

Anaconda Expands Enterprise AI Platform with Outerbounds Acquisition

CE-Ventures portfolio company Anaconda has acquired Outerbounds, the company behind Metaflow, the open-source AI and machine learning orchestration framework used by advanced engineering organisations including Realtor.com, GE HealthCare, and Warner Brothers.

The acquisition marks an important step in Anaconda's evolution from a trusted foundation for enterprise AI development into a unified platform spanning the full AI-native development lifecycle, from experimentation and workflow orchestration to governance and production deployment.

As AI reshapes how software is built, enterprise development pipelines are expanding rapidly. AI-generated code now accounts for a substantial share of new code creation, increasing the need for secure, verified, and reproducible development environments. At the same time, organisations face growing risks around code quality, dependency security, governance, and the ability to operate increasingly complex AI systems at scale.

By bringing Outerbounds into Anaconda, the combined platform will integrate workflow orchestration, compute management, experiment tracking, secure packages, verified dependencies, and enterprise governance within a single environment. This gives organisations a trusted layer to build, iterate, and operate AI systems at scale, while retaining control within their own infrastructure.

"For years, Anaconda has served as the trusted foundation for AI and data science within development, and this acquisition is the natural next chapter," said David DeSanto, CEO of Anaconda. "For the first time, with Anaconda and Outerbounds, enterprises can securely scale complex, compound AI systems from idea all the way to production on the infrastructure they already trust."

With more than 50 million users and 21 billion downloads, Anaconda is widely used by data science, AI, and enterprise development teams around the world. The acquisition extends its foundation of secure packages, verified dependencies, and reproducible builds further into production AI workflows.

The acquisition strengthens Anaconda's position as a trusted enterprise platform for secure, scalable, and AI-native development.

ANACONDA Anaconda is the trusted foundation for AI-native development, providing secure, enterprise-grade Python and data science tooling: anaconda.com

Is Your Startup Crisis-Proof? CE-Creates Leads Expert Roundtable to Examine Founder Resilience

What makes a startup resilient and investable when market conditions turn? That question was at the centre of a high-level discussion co-hosted by Crescent Enterprises, the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Center (Sheraa), and Pearl Initiative, bringing together founders, investors, accelerators, and ecosystem leaders to examine how governance can strengthen startup resilience through periods of volatility.

Led by Rakhil Fernando, Head of CE-Creates, and aligned with wider UAE entrepreneur resilience initiatives, the session explored a clear message: capital no longer follows growth alone. Increasingly, it follows companies with the structures, decision-making discipline, and institutional confidence to hold together under pressure.

The discussion, themed Governance, Resilience, and Institutional Confidence in Uncertain Markets, featured Lubna Sohraab, Head of Community at Sheraa; Ashwin Joshi, Director at startAD; Sudarshan Pareek, Senior Vice President at CE-Ventures; and Amir Melad, CEO of ION.

Panellists examined where fragility first appears in startups, noting that early warning signs often emerge before financial statements show distress. They are found in unclear decision rights, weak risk escalation, informal oversight, and governance structures that have not kept pace with the speed of innovation. As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly embedded across business functions, the gap between experimentation and oversight is becoming even more important for founders and investors to address.

As Rakhil Fernando noted: "Growth does not protect you from a crisis. The governance underneath it does." Sudarshan Pareek added: "The investment community is not looking to avoid risk and uncertainty. We are looking for companies that have built the structures to handle volatility: clear decision rights, real oversight, and founders who treat governance as protection rather than friction. In a tighter market, that is what separates the companies we can back with conviction from those we cannot."

The event marks a key step in a broader body of work, with a joint report to follow that will translate the discussion into a structured Crisis Resilience Framework for GCC startups. The framework will offer founders and investors a practical reference for assessing governance maturity and strengthening resilience before markets turn.

CE-Creates is the internal business incubation platform, which develops early-stage concepts into socially responsible, economically viable, and scalable businesses.

CRESCENT ENTERPRISES CREATES

Major Milestone for ION's Growing EV Charging Network and State of the Art Integrated Platform

ION, the electric vehicle charging joint venture between CE-Creates and BEEAH Group, has marked a major milestone in the expansion of its EV charging network with the launch of a flagship site at Al Mamsha by Alef Group, a modern lifestyle community in Sharjah.

The launch follows ION's appointment as Sharjah's first licensed Charge Point Operator and reflects the accelerating rollout of future-ready EV infrastructure across the emirate. Delivered in collaboration with Alef Group, the unveiling took place in the presence of senior representatives from ION, Crescent Enterprises, BEEAH Group, Sharjah Roads and Transport Authority, and Alef Group, highlighting the strong public-private collaboration supporting Sharjah's clean mobility agenda.

Fully operational and ready for use, the new charging site can accommodate up to six vehicles simultaneously and features a 120kW DC fast charger to enable rapid charging. Residents and visitors Mamsha can book chargers, monitor charging sessions, and complete payments through the ION app, creating a seamless and convenient charging experience. The milestone builds on ION's strategic partnership with Sharjah Roads and Transport Authority to strengthen EV charging infrastructure across the emirate, bringing integrated charging solutions to residential, commercial, and community destinations.

ION's growth reflects CE-Creates' early conviction that EV infrastructure would become central to the mobility transition. Launched before the current global acceleration in electric mobility, the venture was built around three key beliefs: that infrastructure must precede mass adoption; that strong operating partnerships are essential to scale; and that the most effective EV charging model would combine physical infrastructure with a unified digital platform.

By bringing together Crescent Enterprises' operational and commercial capabilities with BEEAH Group's sustainability and environmental infrastructure expertise, ION has developed a platform designed to support both today's charging needs and tomorrow's mobility ecosystem.

As the region's first unified EV charging platform and digital ecosystem, ION is helping advance Sharjah's transition toward cleaner mobility while making EV adoption more accessible, reliable, and convenient for communities across the emirate.

ION

ION is the UAE-based sustainable transport company established as a joint venture between CE-Creates and BEEAH Group: ion.ae

CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP

From Insight to Foresight: Boardroom Responsibility in the Age of Predictive AI

Crescent Enterprises Corporate Citizenship Manager Ola Al Haj Hussin is a featured author in the inaugural edition of Pearl Initiative's new Corporate Governance Insights Series exploring emerging governance issues across the Gulf before they become systemic risks.

The first edition focuses on predictive AI, a fast-emerging shift in corporate decision-making that is advancing faster than many governance frameworks can adapt. Developed with expert contributors from across sectors, the publication examines the governance implications of AI-driven decision-making, including transparency, accountability, data integrity, escalation mechanisms, and the evolving role of boards and leadership teams.

In her article, From Insight to Foresight: Corporate Governance in the Age of Predictive AI, Ola argues that predictive AI is no longer simply a technology trend, but an immediate corporate governance responsibility. As companies increasingly deploy AI to forecast demand, anticipate supply chain disruption, detect cyber risks, strengthen compliance monitoring, and improve decision consistency, governance must evolve from periodic review to continuous oversight. The article highlights the opportunity and risk of AI acceleration. While predictive and prescriptive AI tools can help companies allocate resources more effectively, anticipate risks, and unlock productivity, they can also harden bias, blur accountability, and scale flawed assumptions if not governed responsibly. As Ola notes, "when prediction becomes infrastructure, governance must become architecture."

The piece also reflects Crescent Enterprises' broader approach to AI and social innovation, including investments across the AI value chain and initiatives such as the global AI for Social Innovation coalition and the AI for Social Innovation Prize with MIT Solve. These efforts demonstrate the importance of ensuring innovation and inclusion advance together.

For boards, the article identifies a dual mandate: lean into AI's transformative potential while staying ahead of its risks. That requires stronger technological fluency, clear accountability structures, continuous monitoring, and human oversight where decisions affect rights, livelihoods, safety, or access to opportunity.

The publication reinforces Crescent Enterprises' long-standing commitment to corporate governance as a practical foundation for responsible business. In an era where AI is becoming a decision engine, the advantage will lie with organisations able to move quickly without losing accountability, trust, or judgement.

Crescent Enterprises and SIFF Inspire Young Creatives Through AI Workshop

Crescent Enterprises recently partnered with the Sharjah International Film Festival for Children & Youth (SIFF) to host a youth-focused educational session exploring how technology can support imagination, creativity, and new ways of thinking.

The workshop, titled 'Create Your Fantasy City with AI', invited young participants to use artificial intelligence tools to design and visualise futuristic fantasy cities. The results showcased not only impressive technical curiosity, but also the vivid imagination of young creatives when given access to new tools for storytelling and expression.

Delivered in partnership with SIFF, the session reflects Crescent Enterprises' long-standing commitment to youth development, artistic expression, and intercultural dialogue. For more than twelve years, the partnership has helped create meaningful opportunities for children and young people to share their stories, explore diverse narratives, and engage with the world around them through film, media, and the arts.

Organised by FANN – Sharjah Media Arts for Youth and Children, SIFF has grown into the region's leading film festival for emerging young creatives. Held annually in October, the festival presents a compelling programme of films by established and emerging Arab and international filmmakers, while bringing together young audiences, educators, artists, and industry professionals from around the world.

The AI workshop also reflects the evolving role of technology in creative education. As AI becomes increasingly present across industries, initiatives that help young people engage with it creatively and responsibly are vital to ensuring that frontier technology expands, rather than limits, human imagination.

Crescent Enterprises' partnership with SIFF aligns with its broader corporate citizenship priorities across innovation, education, cultural exchange, and community connection. In the past year alone, these priorities have also included the inaugural Crescent Enterprises AI for Social Innovation Prize with MIT Solve, continued support for entrepreneurship through Sheraa, expanded access to Arabic digital knowledge through Majarra's Renaissance Partners Program, and long-standing support for cultural platforms including SIFF and Arabian Sights Film Festival, the leading showcase of Arab cinema in the US.

Together, these initiatives reflect Crescent Enterprises' belief that creativity, knowledge, and cross-cultural exchange are essential to building more empathetic, connected, and future-ready communities.

About Crescent Enterprises:

Crescent Enterprises is a leading multinational company, growing diversified global businesses that are sustainable, scalable, and profitable. Headquartered in the United Arab Emirates, with business operations in 24 countries, it operates under four enterprise platforms:

- CE-Operates, an operating business platform, focusing on smart infrastructure as the main driver of economic development and growth
- CE-Invests, a strategic investment platform investing in late-stage businesses and private equity funds
- CE-Ventures, a corporate venture capital platform targeting early-stage technology enabled high-growth businesses and venture capital funds globally
- CE-Creates, an internal business incubator, building start-ups that are socially and environmentally conscious

Crescent Enterprises operates with a value system and culture that embraces corporate governance, inclusive growth, and responsible business practices.

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