

HISTORIC DELL AND EMC TRANSACTION SET TO CLOSE

ROUND ROCK, Texas: Dell Inc and EMC Corp yesterday announced that they intend to close the transaction to combine Dell and EMC on Wednesday, September 7, 2016. Dell Technologies, the name of the new combined company, will begin operating immediately following the close of the transaction. The announcement follows regulatory approval of the Dell and EMC transaction by China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), which has granted clearance for the companies' proposed combination. MOFCOM approval was the final regulatory condition to closing the transaction. EMC shareholders approved the transaction on July 19,



EMC's Jon Tucci

with approximately 98 percent of voting EMC shareholders casting their votes in favor of the merger, representing approximately 74 percent of EMC's outstanding common stock.

"This is an historic moment for both Dell and EMC. Combined, we will be exceptionally well-positioned for growth in the most strategic areas of next generation IT including digital transformation, software-defined data center, converged infrastructure, hybrid cloud, mobile and security," said Michael Dell, chairman and CEO of Dell Technologies. "Our investments in R&D and innovation, along with our 140,000 team members around the

world, will give us unmatched scale, strength and flexibility, deepening our relationships with customers of all sizes."

"I am proud of everything we've built at EMC - from humble beginnings as a Boston-based startup to a global, world-class technology company with an unyielding dedication to our customers," said Joe Tucci, chairman and chief executive officer of EMC. "The combination of Dell and EMC creates a new powerhouse in the industry - providing the essential technology for the next era in IT."

At closing, EMC shareholders will receive \$24.05 per share in cash in

addition to a newly issued tracking stock linked to a portion of EMC's economic interest in the VMware business. Based on the estimated number of EMC shares outstanding at the close of the transaction, EMC shareholders are expected to receive approximately 0.111 shares of new tracking stock for each EMC share. Upon close of the transaction, EMC shares under the ticker symbol "EMC" will be suspended from trading on the New York Stock Exchange. Shares of the tracking stock, trading under the ticker symbol "DVMT," are expected to begin trading on the New York Stock Exchange on Wednesday, September 7.

DRONES HELPING CALIFORNIA FARMERS SAVE EVERY DROP

TECHNOLOGY PAVING WAY TO EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

LOS BANOS: A drone whirred to life in a cloud of dust, then shot hundreds of feet skyward for a bird's-eye view of a vast tomato field in California's Central Valley, the nation's most productive farming region. Equipped with a state-of-the-art thermal camera, the drone crisscrossed the field, scanning it for cool, soggy patches where a gopher may have chewed through the buried drip irrigation line and caused a leak.

In the drought-prone West, where every drop of water counts, California farmers are in a constant search for ways to efficiently use the increasingly scarce resource. Cannon Michael is putting drone technology to work on his fields at Bowles Farming Co. near Los Banos, 120 miles southeast of San Francisco. About 2,100 companies and individuals have federal permission to fly drones for farming, according to the drone industry's Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International. Federal regulators Monday relaxed the rules on small, commercial drones, a

move that could spur even greater use of such aircraft on farms.

'Only way to stay in business'

Michael is descended from Henry Miller, a renowned cattle rancher, farmer and Western landowner who helped transform semi-arid central California into fertile farmland 150 years ago by building irrigation canals, some still flowing today. Six generations later, Michael farms a 17-square-mile portion of that same land, growing melons, carrots, onions, cotton and almonds, while carrying on in the same pioneering spirit as Miller. "I've always been a big fan of technology," said Michael, 44, mindful of how climate change is making water more precious. "I think it's really the only way we're going to stay in business."

On his 2,400-acre tomato crop alone, Michael estimates that this year his leak-detecting drones could save enough water to sustain more than 550 families of four for a year. California endured the

driest four-year period on record before a relatively wet and snowy winter this year overflowed some reservoirs in the northern part of the state. Southern California, however, remains dry, and the statewide drought has not ended.

Beyond California, drones are becoming fixtures on farms in places such as Canada, Australia, South Africa and Latin America as they become more affordable and easier to use, said Ian Smith of DroneDeploy, a San Francisco-based industry leader in drone software development. A farmer can order a commercial-grade drone online for \$2,000 and receive it in the mail days later, he said. Its video camera is then paired up with a smartphone or computer tablet that is used to control the drone. "Hook it up to a smartphone. Boom. Take off and you're in business," Smith said.

Full potential

Many farmers, however, have yet to grasp the full potential beyond capturing video images of

crops or using infrared cameras to spot color variations in the plants that can signal a problem. Few have used technology and invested in it to the degree Michael has. This year he began using the thermal camera, which can cost up to \$10,000 and can show moisture variations in soil. He also created a new management position at his company dedicated to overseeing drones.

Recently, Danny Royer, the new vice president of technology at Bowles, stood at the tailgate of his pickup studying live images transmitted to the screen of his tablet as a drone buzzed 300 feet overhead. Rows of mature tomato plants appeared on the screen in glowing burnt orange, indicating warmer, drier areas, while dark patches of purple showed the cool moist soil hidden below the plants.

After taking the images back to his office to analyze them, he decided there were no leaks to repair, but the soil needed to be enriched in places to help the field grow evenly. On Monday, the Federal Aviation Administration eased the rules so that operators of commercial drones that weigh less than 55 pounds will no longer need to go through the long, expensive process of earning an airplane pilot's license.

Instead, they will have to take a written test - but not an actual flying test at the controls of a plane - and will be issued a drone license for \$150. The rule change and emerging technology could make drones more attractive tools for farmers, said Brandon Stark, director of the University of California's Center of Excellence for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Safety, based at the Merced campus. However, he said that until federal regulators clarify parts of the new rules, commercial drones must continue to fly below 400 feet, limiting their use on very large fields.

Stark is seeking what he calls the Holy Grail of drone use in agriculture - enabling them to directly diagnose what ails a tree, whether it's deficiencies in water or nutrients, or a pest - without having to send a person into the field. "We're just getting started," Stark said. "The research is really still in its infancy." —AP



LOS BANOS: In this photo taken July 25, 2016, Danny Royer, vice president of technology at Bowles Farming Co, prepares to pilot a drone over a tomato field near Los Banos. —AP



AUCKLAND: Live streaming equipment is seen during the third day of internet mogul Kim Dotcom's extradition appeal at the High Court. —AFP

DOTCOM'S BATTLE TO AVOID TRIAL GOES LIVE

AUCKLAND: The protracted battle to have Megaupload founder Kim Dotcom face video piracy charges in the United States broke new ground yesterday with live-streaming of his appeal against extradition. Dotcom won approval to live-stream his bid to avoid leaving New Zealand after successfully arguing that global interest required more than standard brief television clips.

The case, in the Auckland High Court, is expected to last six to eight weeks and while the verdict in at least one previous New Zealand trial has been broadcast live, this is the first time a hearing has been live-streamed in full. "Show me a short video or picture of how you are watching the live stream right now. Here's mine," Dotcom tweeted during the lunch adjournment with a photo of himself watching his lawyers on TV.

Judge Murray Gilbert ruled the case could only be streamed with a 20-minute delay, to allow the court time to prevent any restricted material from being published, and all footage was to be removed from the internet when the hearing ends. Dotcom, a German national with permanent residency in New Zealand, faces decades in jail if convicted in the United

States of piracy, which US authorities say cost copyright owners hundreds of millions of dollars. He was first arrested nearly five years ago during a police raid on his mansion near Auckland after the FBI shut down Megaupload's servers.

After several legal battles, a court ruled in December last year there was "overwhelming" evidence to support extradition of the 42-year-old and three other Megaupload founders. However, the case could rumble on for several more years with Dotcom vowing to continue legal challenges if he loses this appeal. The prosecution has argued that Megaupload willfully breached copyright by hosting illegally created movie, music and software files.

Dotcom claimed Megaupload was a genuine file-sharing site that did its best to police copyright infringement but had 50 million daily users and could not control every aspect of their activity. Dotcom has denied any wrongdoing and accused US authorities of pursuing a vendetta against him on behalf of politically influential Hollywood studios. The FBI alleges Megaupload netted more than US\$175 million in criminal proceeds and cost copyright owners more than US\$500 million by offering pirated content. —AFP

BERLIN'S IFA TECH FAIR DONS VIRTUAL REALITY HEADSETS

BERLIN: Virtual and augmented reality gadgets are expected to hog the limelight at Berlin's mega consumer electronics show IFA this week, as Pokemon Go gave a tantalizing preview of the appetite for reality-altering technologies. VR headsets and cameras will jostle for attention, while analysts expect smartphone makers to also unveil new models compatible with the latest in such technologies.

The annual IFA show, which began as an exhibition on the new medium of radio more than 90 years ago, is today a massive showcase for consumers to touch and feel the latest in technological innovations. Over six days from Friday, tech giants will be seeking to grab consumers' attention with novelties as diverse as the latest in high definition resolution television screens to 3D printers to fitness gadgets.

Being the last major show before Christmas, it has a large influence over the critical European holiday gift giving season. Smartphones and tablets have in recent years dominated the headlines at the show, but faced with a maturing market, manufacturers are struggling to find new innovations to persuade consumers to swap their already fancy phone with an even fancier one. But virtual reality and augmented reality may be the next cash cow.

Gaming app Pokemon Go, which combines both, has been a runaway hit, sending millions of people young and old out into the streets to catch digital monsters. "The game gives a preview of how fascinating reality technology is for many people. Virtual reality has the ability to turn our daily habits upside down," said Hans-Joachim Kamp, who heads gfu,

Germany's federation for consumer and home electronic firms.

'Very early market'

Goldman Sachs predicted earlier this year that the virtual reality and augmented reality markets would reach \$80 billion by 2025. The difference between the two is that while virtual reality blocks the user's view of the real world through special glasses, augmented reality blends real life with virtual reality. For IHS Insight analyst Ian Fogg, "VR is very much a trend of the moment, a trend of what's happening." "The really interesting thing is how big is the market, what role do smartphones play in this, what kind of concept will work on VR and what kind of consumers will embrace VR," he said. Fogg said the industry was still testing the waters.

"A lot depends on Google Daydream initiative, whether they're going to talk about that around IFA, or whether they are going to wait until a date in the autumn," he added. Daydream is essentially a mobile store for VR games and apps. Once that is up, it could potentially spur consumers to purchase headsets or motion controllers that are compatible with Daydream. It is unclear when Daydream will launch, but a key hurdle was cleared last month when Google released the Nougat update of its Android operating system that is capable of running the platform.

Beyond VR, major smartphone and smartwatch makers have all lined up to unveil new offerings. Annette Zimmermann from research agency Gartner Deutschland believes that the South Korea's Samsung and Chinese giant Huawei are likely to roll out new smartwatches, while Japanese group Sony may well present its latest Xperia smartphone. —AFP

CISCO MIDDLE EAST APPOINTS SHUKRI EID AS EAST REGION'S MANAGING DIRECTOR

DUBAI: Cisco Middle East has announced that Shukri Eid has been appointed Managing Director of its East Region effective immediately. In his new role, Shukri will lead the Cisco's business in the UAE, Oman, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Yemen and work closely with partners to support private and public sector customers in their efforts to digitize and transform their operations. Shukri is a Cisco veteran of nearly 10 years and has worked in multiple leadership capacities across the organization. Over his 20-year career he has led high-profile strategy, business and technology transformational engagements, working with senior officials and executives across emerging markets.

Commenting on Shukri's appointment, Mike Weston, Vice President for Cisco Middle East said, "This is a dynamic time where we are experiencing fast-paced changes and evolving trends across industries. As a technology leader, our focus is on accelerating our ability to respond to our customer and partner needs in support of their aspirations. Shukri Eid is a passionate leader with an extensive track record of achievements under his belt, and I am confident of our ability to capture the tremendous opportunities that exist across our markets with him at the helm of the East Region. His management expertise and profound appreciation for the opportunities presented by digitization position us ideally to execute against

our strategic priorities and drive continued growth." In addition to his focus on developing and delivering on business strategy, Shukri will champion people development and build on the momentum achieved in making Cisco one of the most attractive



Managing Director Shukri Eid

places to work for top talent in the technology sector.

"I look forward to my new role during what is an exciting time for Cisco and the region. The time is ripe to harness the power

of digitization and there is greater need from our partners, customers and governments across our markets to help accelerate their journeys towards becoming smarter, more competitive and more connected in the new economy," said Shukri Eid, Managing Director - East Region, Cisco Middle East. "Our talented team and expanding portfolio of solutions place us at the forefront of their efforts to capture this immense potential."

A Cisco Leadership Pipeline Program alumnus, Shukri most recently held the position of Senior Director of Country Digitization Acceleration (CDA) in Cisco's EMEAR region, working with government and industry leaders to accelerate national digitization strategies. Prior to that he was the Director managing Cisco Consulting Services in the same region, where he led a team advising large customer organizations across public sector and enterprise as well as telecom service providers. Prior to joining Cisco, Shukri held a number of senior consultancy roles at leading blue chips, including IBM Global Business Services and Pricewaterhouse Coopers, with engagements involving local and federal government, education, financial services, and defense. He holds a master's degree in business administration from Strathclyde University and a bachelor's degree in electrical and computer engineering from Jordan University of Science and Technology.