

## Business

# Huawei founder: AI will change how international community develops

Zhengfei hosts Kaplan, Cochrane OBE and Wenlin in an open dialogue on innovation, rules and trust

KUWAIT: Ren Zhengfei, CEO and founder of Huawei, hosted an open discussion alongside other prominent guests examining the role of innovation and trust in the future of the information, communication and technology (ICT) sector. He stated that technology will continue evolving in an unpredictable manner and emphasized that there was no need to feel uneasy about this. "We should embrace this new era with great courage," said Zhengfei.

Zhengfei was joined in the discussion by computer scientist, futurist, and serial entrepreneur Jerry Kaplan; Professor Peter Cochrane OBE, innovator, academic, and consultant, and Zhang Wenlin, President of Corporate Strategy Department, Huawei. When asked how he saw the future, Zhengfei commented: "I believe that society is on the eve of another explosion of new theories and technologies. Technology will continue evolving in a manner that we cannot predict yet. We can't tell what the trends of the future will be."

Artificial intelligence, however, will have a large role to play. "AI will certainly start being applied on a large scale," said Zhengfei. "It will just create greater wealth and generate higher efficiency for society as a whole. AI will be the core variable that will influence and shape a country's future capabilities and bring disruptive changes to that country. This means AI will fundamentally change how the international community develops. With support from infrastructure that includes super-computers, super-large storage systems, and ultra-high-speed connectivity, humanity will welcome a new level of prosperity."

Speaking on AI's impact on society, Kaplan said: "AI is not magic. It's not really about intelligence at all. It's simply a new wave of automation. To understand what's going to happen with AI, you simply have to look at previous waves of automation. While automation disrupts labor markets, it doesn't cause the jobs to disappear.



Ren Zhengfei

New jobs will be created. As we become wealthier, demand will be created. We get a new middle class and new demands for goods and services. And in fact, automation will change the nature of labor, not put people out of work."

Cochrane discussed the purpose of AI and the ICT sector. "What are we trying to do? First of all, we have to try and create sustainable societies. To do that, we have to get away from the idea that we can polish and improve what we've got. It won't work. Transformation demands biotech, nano tech, AI and robotics, and the Internet of Things. Because anything we create for the future has to be recycled, repurposed, reused, and the only way we can orchestrate this is with the IoT. We have to stop producing more and more for the few, and we have to start providing sufficient for the many. If we do not, we will never see a stable planet where people are living equitable lives. There is sufficient on this planet to support every human, but with the technology we have right now, we stand to destroy our ecosystem. So, we have to



Coffee with Ren Zhengfei, founder and CEO of Huawei

change the way we live and the way we do things."

Within the past year, levels of trust in technology, particularly AI and 5G, have been challenged. On this point, Zhengfei referred to how, then the first train was introduced to China, people thought that they were powered by ghosts and couldn't figure out how they ran - but that now no-one complains about them at all. "Now people are very concerned about AI," he said. "They are worried that AI will cause unemployment, disrupt social structures, and distort our ethics. They worry too much. Advancements in technology have helped us create more wealth. 5G itself is a tool, just like the ballast beds that train tracks are laid on. That's all it is about. People should have more trust and tolerance towards new things. The most prominent feature of innovation is that it gives everyone academic freedom, allowing peo-

ple to explore."

"People have concerns, fears, and high expectations for technology," said Wenlin. "I think the best way forward is to have an open discussion about the nature and stages of technology with people like sociologists, scientists, regulators, and tech companies. With more dialogue among industry players, I think we will work out a trustworthy management framework based on a more reasonable and clear understanding of technology. Then we will help more people understand technology and see it in a rational way. As tech companies, we should do everything in our power to take on complexity ourselves, enable our users to understand the key nature of technology and the rights they have, and give them more choices. This way, we will gradually earn users' trust and continue building trust from society as a whole."

## Al Mulla Automobiles welcomes customers to new Mercedes-Benz service center in Ahmadi



Management and staff

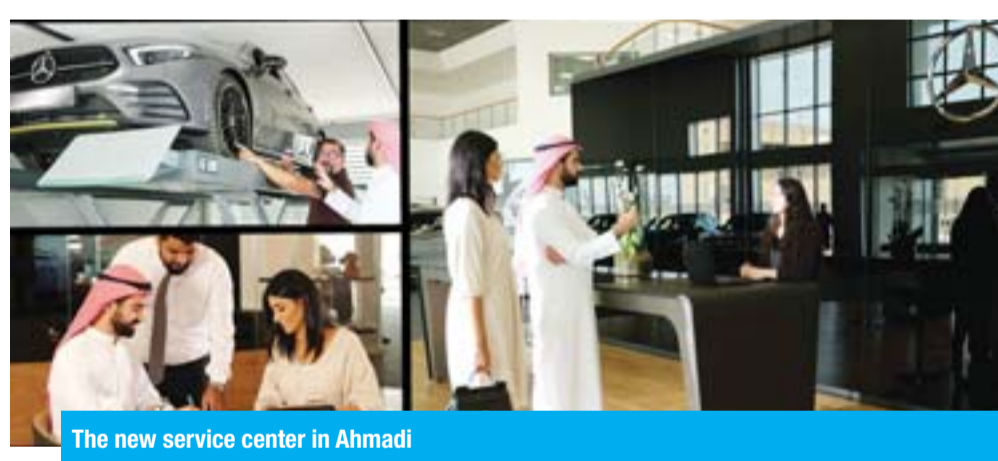
KUWAIT: Al Mulla Automobiles, the sole authorized distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, welcomes its customers to its Mercedes-Benz Certified Pre-Owned showroom and service center in Ahmadi, where it offers customers a range of certified pre-owned vehicles and a wide selection of maintenance and repair services in its service center.

This facility is part of Al Mulla Automobiles dedication to being closer to its customers across Kuwait and providing them with the best services, while maintaining its promise to offering them the best experience at all of its facilities and showrooms.

The Mercedes-Benz Certified Pre-Owned showroom conforms to the Mercedes-Benz future retail concept MAR2020, which can be easily felt in the overall look and design of the showroom, vehicle presentation, sales process, and customer consultation.

The new facility extends over an area of 2,500 m<sup>2</sup> divided into 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> for CPO showroom operation, 1,300 m<sup>2</sup> for after sales and parts operations. The showroom has the capacity to display 15 Certified Pre-Owned cars and features private and semi-private customer consultation areas, in addition to two vehicle delivery areas where customers can receive their cars.

Pre-owned Mercedes-Benz cars under this label fulfill stringent criteria and undergo thorough checks by the qualified Mercedes-Benz technicians to ensure that customers who drive Mercedes-Benz Certified cars have confidence in the valuable services that this program delivers, including a warranty that



The new service center in Ahmadi

meets the highest standards.

When customers choose a pre-owned Mercedes-Benz under this program, they get the same attention and care as expected when buying a new car. Every pre-owned Mercedes-Benz car has passed rigorous safety, mechanical, and electrical checks. The signed multi-point checklist ensures that the vehicle has undergone thorough testing.

The new service center in Ahmadi offers a variety of options that suit the needs of different customers and aims to achieve their full satisfaction. The Ahmadi service center provides services such as General Repair, Express Service, Quick Lube and a Spare Parts.

Whether the customer brings the vehicle in or requests it to be picked up, the vehicle is inspected through the complementary Active Reception service to make sure that required

jobs are properly handled.

The new facility also offers the Mercedes-Benz ExpressService, which provides the highest quality, precise and efficient service in the shortest period of time. The ExpressService includes all annual services such as the Maintenance Repair Service A and Service B, oil change, AC system service, tire change, and brake service. On the other hand, the Quick Lube offers customers a fast engine oil and filter oil change within 30 minutes only.

The Certified Pre-Owned Showroom at Ahmadi is open from 8:30am to 8:30pm Saturday to Thursday, while the Mercedes-Benz Ahmadi Service Center is open to receive customers from 7:00am to 9:00pm (Saturday to Wednesday) and 7:00am to 6:00pm on Thursday. Customers can also pre-book their service appointments by visiting the website.

## 11% growth of new KFH online users sign up for H1, 2019

KUWAIT: New KFH online users sign up surged by 11 percent for the period January - July in 2019 over the same period last year. In 2018, the total usage of KFH online services reached roughly 90 million. These numbers confirm that KFH is on track and is adapting well to the digital era demands.

Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Waleed Mandani said that these figures reflect the efficiency of KFH online services,

while indicating how KFH effectively utilizes technology to ensure that its business and customer expectations are aligned.

He added that KFH embraced the change in banking and financial services and introduced a wide range of high-end digital services over the past few years.

Mandani explained that KFH had made significant strides with its digital transformation journey, drawing attention to its advanced and innovative financial services and products. This includes KFH Xpress, instant financial transfers service using RippleNet network, Mobile Deposit of Cheques that enables quick deposit of cheques in a fast and efficient way to customers' accounts, the queuing system Skiplino for booking appointments electronically in bank branches, opening several KFH-Go self-banking stations, cash withdrawals via mobile using QR code, Civil ID or mobile number, KFH Pay service for electronic pay-



Waleed Mandani

ments, Robotics Process Automation, Artificial-Intelligence-driven Chatbot, KFH Pass that allows customers to postpone the one of their installment payments online, and many other digital services.

## Burgan Bank signs exclusive partnership with Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons Co



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced that it has signed an exclusive partnership with Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons Company, whereby its customers will be offered many exclusive benefits and discounts.

"We are delighted to be partnering with Al-Yousifi Company, one of the largest and well-known companies in

Kuwait, to offer our clients everything that is extraordinary and different," said Nasser Al Qaisi, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Burgan Bank. It is worth mentioning that under this agreement Burgan Bank customers will be able to get discounts up to 50%. This offer will not be seasonal but throughout the year.

## Fitch affirms KIB's long-term IDR at A+ with a stable outlook

KUWAIT: Fitch Ratings London, one of the leading global credit ratings agencies, has reaffirmed Kuwait International Bank's Long-term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'A+' and affirmed viability rating (VR) at 'bb-' with a stable outlook on 30 September 2019. The stable outlook on KIB's Long-term IDR reflects the outlook on the Kuwaiti sovereign rating.

According to Fitch, KIB continues to benefit from a fairly stable operating environment in Kuwait despite the economic impact of low oil prices. The Bank is exposed to slower economic growth, but Fitch believes that the Kuwait government's continuing capital-spending plans will partially offset such pressures. Fitch's expectation of support from the authorities is underpinned by Kuwait's strong ability to provide support to domestic banks, as reflected by the sovereign rating (AA/Stable) and strong willingness to do so irrespective of the banks' size, franchise, funding structure and the level of government ownership. This view is reinforced by the authorities' record of support for the domestic banking system in case of need.

Fitch added that the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) operates a strict regime with hand's on monitoring to ensure the viability of banks, and has acted swiftly in the past to provide support where needed.

In Fitch's view, KIB's Viability Rating (VR) reflects the bank's small, but growing, domestic franchise, concentrated balance sheet, volatile asset quality, variable profitability and high reliance on wholesale funding. Fitch emphasized that the VR factors in the bank's adequate capitalization and well-managed liquidity, as well as



Sheikh Mohamed Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

a fairly stable operating environment in Kuwait. In Fitch's view KIB liquidity risk remained contained.

Fitch also added that the issuance of \$300 million additional tier 1 capital notes in 2Q19 restored the bank's tier 1 ratio and CAR to 19.5 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively.

Fitch also emphasized that the reserve coverage of impaired financing continues to be high by international standards due to the prudent actions of CBK requiring the build-up of precautionary reserves. Fitch believes this is necessary to mitigate the bank's significant concentration.

Sheikh Mohamed Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of KIB said: "This latest rating action is reflective of KIB's impressive standing, and it serves to highlight the Bank's strong financial core as well as its growth strategy. This strategy which is currently underway strive to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers, by adopting latest technology and digital solutions that are accessible at any time and any place to truly satisfy our customers."

Al-Jarrah further added: "The global banking industry must evolve in a way that is compatible for the future and in this effort, KIB made major investments in upgrading IT infrastructure, streamlining systems and processes to provide customers with an enhanced digital experience."