

Saturday, October 3, 2020

GERMANY



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30 YEARS OF UNITY

Since reunification, Germany has seen its best 30 years. The next few could be challenging but new strategies can help the country continue to succeed

TOP ATTRACTIONS

Wellness retreats, culinary adventures and a slice of history on the go

3 RECIPES TO TRY

Classic sauerbraten, pretzels and potatoes done just right

A ROAD PAVED WITH TECH

● How Germany's legacy automakers are preparing for an electric, autonomous and sustainable future

BY RIAZ NAQVI
Special to GN Focus

From a technological, economic and political perspective, there's little doubt that the mainstream electric vehicle future is nearly here — and German carmakers are betting big on it. “The future of the automobile is electric and intelligently connected,” Carsten Bender, Managing Director at Audi Middle East, tells *GN Focus*.

He points to the brand's e-tron and e-tron Sportback models, which are already available in the region. Porsche, another Volkswagen subsidiary, already retails three models of its electric Taycan in the UAE, starting from Dh401,000.

Serious investments

Globally, German automakers are spending big on the electric future. Volkswagen, the world's largest carmaker, has committed to spending €60 billion (about Dh257 billion) on electric vehicles (EVs) and developing 60 per cent of the software in its cars by 2025, and Stuttgart-headquartered Daimler has partnered with chipmaker Nvidia to build in-vehicle computing systems, AI computing infrastructure and, perhaps most interestingly, the ability to provide over-the-air software updates to cars, including Mercedes-Benz's next-generation fleet.

Over in Munich, BMW has estab-

lished iVentures, a venture capital fund investing in start-ups involved in areas such as autonomous driving, e-mobility, AI, and digital car and automotive cloud services.

Eye on sustainability

However, two years of global declining auto sales and uncertain economic headwinds pose a challenge to all legacy automakers. “We are experiencing greater trends towards sustainable transport, convenience, personalisation and affordability,” says John Gillespie, Principal Engineer — Transport Planning at consultancy WSP Middle East, who adds that transport options are now addressing convenience without requiring the ownership of a personal car.

“Huge investments are being made in public transport, soft mobility and on-demand transport in the region with the ultimate goal to limit private transport, traffic and personal car usage — while usually being cheaper. Many analysts suggest we have even reached peak car in parts of the western world — the distance travelled per capita has peaked and will now fall in a sustained manner. I expect this trend within the Middle East as well, given the focus and investment in prestigious non-car projects such as Etihad Rail, Hyperloop, Riyadh metro, Makkah metro, pedestrian bridges, soft mobility projects and increased bus services across the region.”



Porsche, another Volkswagen subsidiary, already retails three models of its electric Taycan in the UAE, starting from Dh401,000

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One decade in the growth region Middle East & Africa

Vitronic Machine Vision Middle East celebrated its 10th anniversary short before the pandemic in the end of 2019. And now in most of the countries of the Gulf region Vitronic's Poliscan systems are part of the cityscape. Over 150 employees of the German-based company's largest subsidiary ensure road safety and the reduction of serious accidents. In addition, there are twelve service centres in the IMEA region, which ensure close customer proximity to more than 10,000 traffic monitoring systems on site according to German standards.

Market leader in the region

"Right from the start in 2009, the focus was on the customer and his requirements for traffic monitoring," explains Youssef El Hansali. Vitronic's LIDAR-based solutions was also convincing in terms of technology and product quality. No competitor was able to offer systems that measure over several lanes without roadside installations and have comparable acquisition rates and accuracy characteristics. In 2010, Vitronic Machine Vision Middle East delivered the first stationary and mobile Poliscan systems to Saudi Arabia. This was followed by major orders from Oman, Iraq, the Emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, which made Vitronic the market leader with more than 50% market share in the region.

New developments to "Vision Zero"

Vitronic Machine Vision Middle East was also able to make a significant contribution to helping reduce the number of road casualties with the Poliscan systems. Even through these hard times Vitronic continues supporting authorities in the IMEA region in achieving this goal and making road traffic in the region even safer," says El Hansali. "We are working closely with the local police organizations to develop the future of traffic monitoring with their goal "Vision Zero" which says that there will be no more road fatalities in the Emirates."

Youssef El Hansali
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Audi's Human-Centric Lighting project is experimenting with the effects of various lighting shades on passengers' concentration and memory



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For Gillespie, the move should not be to increase net growth in sales but rather to boost the attractiveness of electrical cars while phasing out their fossil fuel-driven counterparts.

"Our direction is clear," says Bender, adding, "Sustainable mobility suitable for everyday use." He points to Audi's 2025 plan to ensure all its plants are carbon neutral as an initiative that fits this bill. "This aligns with Audi's plans to have around 30 electric models in its line-up by 2025, and in our region we are very much aligned with this momentum."

In a bid to boost its pandemic-stricken economy and encourage automakers to sell environmentally-friendly vehicles, the German government announced a multibillion-euro subsidy programme in June. The initiative sees the government subsidising €6,000 on electric vehicles that cost up to €40,000, while buyers of these cars pay 3 per cent lower sales tax. "This is about renewable energies," German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz told CNN. "This is about all the climate activities which are necessary to get to a [carbon] neutral economy in 2050. We have to start now."

Role of AI

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been integrated into vehicles at a steady pace over the past few years, adding a number of useful features. These include lane departure warning systems, which alert drivers when they are veering outside their lane; autonomous emergency braking; adaptive cruise control, which

automatically keeps a car a set distance from the one in front of it; and adaptive front lighting. Audi's Human-Centric Lighting project is experimenting with the effects of various lighting shades on passengers' concentration and memory. Bosch has something similar – an autonomous interior camera system that recognises a driver's tiredness, warns them and even slows the vehicle down if need be.

A report on artificial intelligence in the automotive industry shared with *GN Focus* sheds light on various aspects of a key technology for the sector. "It is helping the important business areas of smart factory, driver assistance systems, autonomous driving, customer experience and smart city traffic infrastructure such that companies remain competitive," says the report published by NetApp, a data management and cloud storage solutions provider that is working with Nvidia to build AI architecture for the automotive sector. "With AI, complex everyday tasks can be solved where conventional algorithms fail.

This is also true for the automotive industry, which is struggling to cope with the sustainability debate, the trend towards e-mobility and now the coronavirus crisis."

According to the report, AI can be a panacea for a number of issues in the automotive industry, though it adds that public acceptance remains a challenge. An online survey commissioned by NetApp earlier this year found that only 16.7 per cent of 1,000 respondents were aware of the benefits of AI in cars. Just 9 per cent said they used any kind of internet service in their car, and 12.2 per cent would



Carsten Bender
Managing Director,
Audi Middle East



John Gillespie
Principal Engineer,
Transport Planning,
WSP Middle East

consider it important for their next vehicle to support such services.

The report outlines a three-stage AI model for technology. Stage one focuses on collecting and correlating data, allowing manufacturers to trace every part used in a vehicle back to its source, reducing warranty risk of defective parts and even organising more finely targeted recalls. The second stage is about recording and interpreting conditions – which the report refers to as "human-inspired pattern recognition" – particularly temperature, vibrations and humidity. This can aid preventative maintenance by helping consumers avoid major repairs. Finally, stage three sees the margin for algorithm error reduced to the extent that autonomous driving is safe.

Factors affecting the future

In terms of technological advances aiding the electric vehicle cause, Gillespie singles out lithium-ion batteries. "Prices of lithium-ion batteries have fallen 87 per cent over the past decade and are forecast to continue to decline." Bigger, better-performing batteries are massively important for the electric vehicle category – the first fully electric cars suffered from lower ranges in comparison to their conventional counterparts. "Electricity is also much cheaper than petrol to run a vehicle, therefore running costs will be lower throughout the life cycle of the car. In the UK, the tipping point was reached this year where an electrical car was cheaper to own and run than a petrol car over the car's life cycle."

The technological pieces are falling into place for an electric, autonomous and affordable future for cars. Will Germany's automakers reign supreme over younger upstarts such as Tesla? Time will tell. ■

AI has been integrated into vehicles at a steady pace over the past few years



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GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

● UAE and Germany embrace future trends with high ambitions and there are many fields where we can further strengthen our cooperation, says **Ernst Peter Fischer**, Germany's ambassador to the UAE

By CHIRANTI SENGUPTA
Editor

How would you sum up the current relations between Germany and the UAE?

The bilateral relations between Germany and the UAE have developed very well since the establishment of diplomatic relations in May 1972. The founding father of the UAE, the late Shaikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, had a very close relationship with Germany and visited the European nation several times. As a consequence, we established a strategic partnership with the UAE in 2004.

The visit of His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, to Germany last year did not only mark the 15th anniversary of this strategic partnership but also upgraded our relations to a new level. The joint statement he signed with German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel during his visit to Berlin set the framework for our future cooperation.

Both countries embrace future trends with high ambitions. I think there are many fields where we can further strengthen our cooperation. These include digitalisation and smart manufacturing, the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence, as well as enhancing the global energy transition. As an example, I would like to mention the Emirati-German task force on the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). The



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● His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, addresses a joint session with Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, prior to a dinner reception at the Chancellor's office in Berlin in June 2019

task force was launched in July this year and will serve as a networking forum to leverage links between businesses, R&D bodies, academics and government bodies in the field of technology, digital connectivity and artificial intelligence.

■ What are your focus areas in strengthening relationship with the UAE?

In 2017, Germany and the UAE signed an energy partnership, resulting in numerous high-level and working-level visits, seminars and studies around renewable energy, energy efficiency, mobility, and new technologies. Hydrogen is one of the central themes of these events at the moment. In my opinion the recovery from the pandemic has to be green and therefore, the role of our energy partnership will become even more significant.

But our relationship is much broader and does not only focus on the economy. We have three German schools in the UAE and in 2019 the first Emirati graduated from

the German International School in Abu Dhabi with the Abitur. The schools and also the Goethe-Institut in Abu Dhabi help us to build cultural bridges between our two countries through the future generations. Moreover, we had the privilege to witness performances of first-class ensembles from Germany in Abu Dhabi such as the *Bayreuther Festspiele*, and I am very happy about Germany being the guest of honour at the 2021 edition of Abu Dhabi International Book Fair.

Last but not least, there is an ongoing close exchange on international politics between Germany and the UAE. The intense exchange between the policy planning departments of the Federal Foreign Office and the UAE's

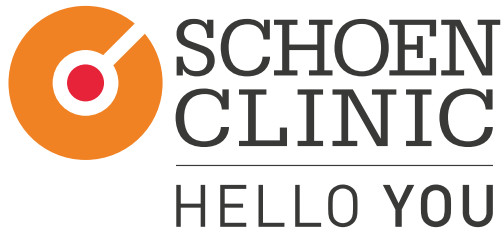
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation about two weeks ago is just one example.

■ Can you provide up-to-date figures of exports and imports between the two nations? What are the major products being traded?

The UAE is Germany's most important trading partner in the region. German exports to the UAE totalled \$9.7 billion (Dh35.6 billion) in 2019, while its imports from the UAE were valued at \$1.2 billion. Aluminium products are the UAE's main export to Germany, while Germany's main exports to the UAE are motor vehicles, machinery and electrical goods. Undeniably, the goods traded reflect the UAE's love affair with safe and fast cars ▶

● Ernst Peter Fischer, German Ambassador to the UAE





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● Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, receives Heiko Maas, German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, in Abu Dhabi in August. They discuss strategic ties between the two countries and ways of strengthening cooperation in the areas of trade investments, education and food security.

and the appreciation for finer things in life. It is no surprise that the main food products the UAE imports from Germany are chocolate and candies.

■ **Germany has always been a preferred travel destination for UAE residents for leisure and health. How does Germany plan to bring tourists back to the nation after the pandemic?**

The coronavirus is an enormous challenge for all of us, especially for tourism. We can't wait to welcome tourists from the UAE back to Germany again, but for the moment, we have to be patient and join our forces to prevent the further spread of the virus. Nevertheless, the UAE and Germany have been reacting quite effectively so far and I am convinced that we will manage to re-establish tourism between our two countries again and even stronger, once the pandemic is under control.

■ **What are your plans for the German community in the UAE? How many Germans are living in the UAE and how many have gone back home since the outbreak of Covid-19?**

The German community in the UAE plays a significant role in our bilateral relations as they have developed personal relations and have built personal bridges between these two countries. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, about 15,000 Germans lived in the UAE and to our knowledge not too many of them have left

the UAE so far. Not only have the UAE become their second home, but since the outbreak of the pandemic the German community feels safe here as we have confidence in the preventive measures taken by the UAE authorities.

■ **Are you expecting any high-profile visits from Germany later this year?**

After quite a few high-ranking political delegations from Germany at the beginning of this year on the occasions of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, World Urban Forum

the last couple of months are just one example for this. The latest visit of German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas to Abu Dhabi in August was the first of its kind since the outbreak of the pandemic and has underpinned the high-level bilateral cooperation between the two nations, as he had some in-depth discussions with Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in the UAE.

■ **Finally, how does the embassy plan to mark the National Day this year?**

Unfortunately, we won't be able to mark our National Day with receptions in Abu Dhabi and Dubai this year because of the ongoing pandemic. Therefore, we decided to prepare a virtual journey through the German-Emirati relations to celebrate the 30th anniversary of German Unity. I would hereby like to invite everyone to join us on this virtual journey through the history, the present and the future of German-Emirati relations, today at 6pm on the Facebook page of the German Embassy. I don't want to reveal too much about the event, but I can promise you some great impressions and perspectives you might have not known about yet.

Moreover our guest of honour Dr Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, will share his thoughts on German-Emirati relations. So make sure to join us today at 6pm.

'Things should look different next year, and we are expecting an interesting Expo in Dubai'



● **Holger Mahnicke**, Germany's Consul General in Dubai, talks about consular responses during Covid-19 and how his team helped the community during the crisis

The year 2020 took a different path than what we expected. We should have been actively preparing for the opening of Dubai Expo by now. But the Covid-19 crisis has changed the focus of work for the German Consulate General in Dubai. After the closure of the airports in the UAE on March 25, our priority had been to repatriate German citizens stuck in the UAE and in the transit areas of the airports in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. We organised three repatriation flights in close cooperation with German tour operators and were about to conclude preparations of a repatriation flight with the German government, when Emirates Airlines started to offer one-way flights to Frankfurt earlier in April.

When the commercial flight became available, we stopped our efforts and shifted the focus to the consular and visa services. We organised ourselves in a way that despite all restrictions due to Covid-19, we were able to provide all possible services to both the German community in Dubai as well as Emiratis in need of an exemption from the travel restrictions. Now we work in two teams, which gives us the necessary flexibility to remain available to our clients amid all disruptions. Unfortunately, things have become complicated and most cases require more time than usual. Most probably this will not change anytime soon. If infection rates continue to increase, entry restrictions and travel warnings will not be lifted.

However, things should look different next year, and we are expecting an interesting Expo in Dubai. The German pavilion — Campus Germany — will focus on the subtheme of sustainability. Germany has a reputation for having produced scores of new ideas and approaches in this area. Germany's energy revolution, the *Energiewende*, has even become a global benchmark. The pavilion is organised like a university where you start with the enrolment and finish with a graduation. The major idea is to get all visitors engaged with a number of interactive exhibits, including through special displays for children. A highlight will be our Nation Day at the Expo, scheduled for November 29, 2021, just a few days before the golden jubilee of the UAE.

BILATERAL TRADE

\$9.7b

German exports to the UAE
in 2019

\$1.2b

Germany's imports from
the UAE

and at important exhibitions such as Arab Health and Gulf Food, travel has come to an almost complete standstill since the outbreak of Covid-19, making it impossible for German delegations to visit the UAE. Nevertheless, our political leaders continued their close cooperation virtually and via phone. Several phone calls between Federal Chancellor Merkel and Shaikh Mohammed Bin Zayed during

Worldwide travel warnings lifted

● The move could help non-European tourist destinations that receive huge number of visitors from Germany

Germany lifted its blanket warning against travelling to all countries outside the European Union early on Thursday, although little is likely to change for most travellers under the new regulation.

The cautious reopening, agreed by the German cabinet three weeks ago, comes as Europe faces an uptick in Covid-19 cases, with many warning the continent is on the cusp of a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Germany imposed a global travel warning in March, when the virus was raging in northern Italy, but lifted it for most European countries in June. In September, Berlin began reissuing warnings for regions within Europe when infections rose above the level of 50 cases per 100,000 people over a week.



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In future, the same standard will be applied to the rest of the world. This means that provided the prevalence of the virus is below that threshold,

travellers will be able to return to Germany without going into quarantine pending a negative test.

At present, entry and exit without restrictions

will only be possible in parts of Europe and Georgia. But with more warnings being lifted in the near future, the change could prove significant

for non-European tourist destinations that have traditionally received large numbers of visitors from the EU's most populous country.

Special provisions for Turkey, with which Germany has close ties as a result of being home to almost four million citizens of Turkish ethnic background, will remain in place. Travel to several coastal destinations will be permitted so long as travellers take a coronavirus test in Turkey before returning.

The foreign ministry will continue to warn against travel to countries that have imposed restrictions on people arriving from Germany due to their own low prevalence of coronavirus.

These include Australia, China, Canada, Rwanda and Uruguay.

— Reuters

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ROAD TO RECOVERY

- A traditional weapon and some radical new strategies could see Germany return to growth in 2021 – unless a second wave of coronavirus infections strikes

BY KEITH J FERNANDEZ
Special to GN Focus

The English language has borrowed several terms from its Indo-European linguistic sibling. But even as the coronavirus blitz forced us all to take refuge in the comfort of a metaphorical eiderdown, policymakers around the world dug out their dictionaries – and doubtless, their macrofinance textbooks – to understand a policy that has prevented Germany from being as badly affected by other economies.

A version of the country's famous Kurzarbeit scheme has been implemented across several major economies, from France and Italy to the UK and Canada. Described as an excellent crisis management tool by the IMF, Kurzarbeit (literally: short work) keeps workers in employment and allows businesses a bit of breathing space during recessionary times. The salary subsidy programme allows German employers to reduce working hours for their staff instead of laying them off. As compensation, the government pays 60 per cent of workers' salaries, although the figure is higher for workers with children.

In practice, this economic bridge means that employees receive 60 per cent of their wages for the hours that they don't work, while being fully remunerated for actual hours on the job. Staff asked to work only 70 per cent of their normal week – 28 hours instead of 40 – therefore only experience a 10 per cent salary loss, allowing them to keep the bagels and bratwurst on the table. With fewer job losses, consumption remains more or less stable at a time when it is desperately needed.

The Kurzarbeit package is expected to cost the state €10 billion (Dh43 billion) this year, but its effects are already being felt. According to a survey by the German IFO economic institute in Munich, 37 per cent of companies interviewed still had workers on short-time hours in August, down from 42 per cent in July. At the end of the second quarter, Germany's unemployment rate was 4.3 per cent, far lower than the EU-wide 7.1 per cent rate, and 11 per cent in the US.

The scheme has helped Germany weather a number of previous crises, notably in 2008 when the nation was the only major economy not to be hit by a downturn in unemployment. "Unemployment did not rise in Germany



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after the 2008 financial crisis like it did in other advanced economies," notes Anke Hassel, an economist at the Hertie School in Berlin. "It was definitely due in large part to the Kurzarbeit because companies did not have to fire their workers," she told NPR.

Economic support programme

Traditional fallbacks are not the only weapon in Germany's arsenal as it rushes to contain the widest economic contraction on record.

Second-quarter economic activity declined by 9.7 per cent, as factories stopped production, trade fairs were postponed, and restaurants and hotels closed. Overall, GDP will fall by 5.2 per cent year on year in 2020, the IFO estimates.

To minimise the effects of what is likely to be the worst recession in 70 years, Germany has rolled out an economic support programme worth €1.1 trillion in March, financed by new borrowing. The amount included a business stabilisation fund of €600 billion, as well as a €50-billion

programme to help small businesses and self-employed professionals vulnerable to bankruptcy. Bridging help for sectors hardest hit by the crisis, such as tourism, hospitality, and entertainment amounted to €25 billion from June to August.

In June, the government launched a further €130 billion stimulus programme. It shored up the country's automotive sector, which represents 5 per cent of its GDP, with €2.2 billion in subsidies on electric cars and another €2 billion for manufacturers and suppliers to spend on research and development. There were also monetary incentives for green investments, VAT tax breaks and extra relief for families with children.

"It's clear that all of this requires a bold response," Chancellor Angela Merkel told reporters in Berlin in June. "It's about securing jobs, and keeping the economy running, or getting it going again."

Adopting new measures

In rolling out these measures, Merkel has abandoned a hitherto-unchangeable policy of running a "black zero" balanced budget. Federal budget deficits above 0.35 per cent of GDP are verboten, thanks to a constitutional debt brake. Germany's initial reluctance to take on more debt – in effect, to spend its way out of the ▶



Olaf Scholz
Finance Minister,
Germany

Education Made in Germany in the UAE

From Kindergarten to the graduate level, the three German International Schools of the United Arab Emirates, situated respectively in Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Dubai offer education “made in Germany”. They are part of a network of currently 140 German Schools Abroad in 72 countries all certified through the German Conference of Ministers of Education (KMK). They adhere to a worldwide quality standard and are recognized for this with the seal of approval “Excellent German School Abroad” signed by the German Federal President. All schools in the network are governed by the Federal Republic of Germany, which sponsors qualified teachers from Germany and financially support the schools.

German Schools Abroad do not only impart academic and language skills, but shape their students to become global citizens. Through the cooperation with Germany and being governed by the Federal Republic of Germany, the three German Schools Abroad in the UAE are at the core of intercultural exchange and place a high emphasis on maintaining German and Arabic cultural assets in a strong school community. They follow a German curriculum, which is specifically supplemented and expanded by Arabic and social studies from the local curriculum.

German Schools Abroad offer a variety of graduate qualifications, such as the German International Abitur (DIA), the International Baccalaureate (IB) or the Bilingual International Baccalaureate (BIB). All respective diplomas offer the highly qualified German students the chance to not only study in Germany but also worldwide.



Deutsche Internationale Schule Abu Dhabi
المدرسة الألمانية الدولية
German International School Abu Dhabi

The German International School in Abu Dhabi (GISAD), founded in 2008, is owned by the German Embassy in Abu Dhabi and generously supported by the Crown Prince Court. Since 2008, GISAD has established itself as a renowned international school that is regularly awarded “very good” from ADEK (Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge).

Roughly 400 students attend GISAD and are taught by highly trained teachers, mainly from Germany, although other nationalities include British, Austrian, Syrian, Egyptian, Palestinian and Jordanian. GISAD has a German curriculum, based on the German Thuringian Education Plan. Our curriculum incorporates bilingual elements and offers our students of 17 different nationalities a multicultural learning environment. The relatively small size of the school allows for a familiar atmosphere, students feel at “home” at GISAD.

The focus on multilingual education begins at the kindergarten level and offers language instruction in German and English. Further, the school provides language integration classes for academically high achieving students with little or no prior knowledge in German but seeking a late entry into the German education system.

Our graduates benefit from the general educational approach the German curriculum offers to combine a global awareness of culture with deepened knowledge in math and sciences: They study different fields of science, medicine, and business administration, to name a few, at prestigious universities. We are proud that the first Emirati student from a German School Abroad graduated in 2019 at GISAD.

For further information please visit: www.gisad.ae
Facebook: @germaninternationalschoolabudhabi
Instagram: @gisabudhabi
Linkedin: @germaninternationalschoolabudhabi



The German International School (DIS Sharjah), is known for its unique ambience of a green oasis right in the heart of Sharjah. Founded in 1976, it is a school with vast experience and a long history, following its commitment to progress and to providing its students with the best education. Having nearly 200 students in kindergarten, primary, secondary and the (G)IB, the DIS Sharjah has succeeded in creating a familial atmosphere that enhances learning and provides the children with a place to feel at home.

The atmosphere of openness and mutual support promotes teamwork as well as personal growth and independence in the students. The campus offers great facilities for scientific work, music, arts and sports while the spacious outdoor area, boasting wide lawns and shading trees is ideal for playing and relaxing.

Thanks to small classes, the DIS Sharjah teachers can give the students the individual attention they require to develop their skills and potentials. We aim to enable their multilingual, responsible and analytical thinking along with digital, social and critical thinking skills to prepare them for the work place of tomorrow.

For further information please visit:
Website: www.dsshajrah.org
Facebook: @dsshajrah.org
Instagram: disshajrah



DISD, the German International School in Dubai, was founded in 2008 and is owned by the Consulate General in Dubai. Around 750 students from more than 30 nations study here in a respectful and open-minded atmosphere. DISD is located in Dubai Academic City and can be counted among the most modern German Schools Abroad. DISD fosters the unique German engineering spirit and aspires STEM excellence (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) from Kindergarten to the Abitur. The school offers an outstanding and inspiring learning environment with modern science labs, two libraries and state-of-the-art sport facilities to cater to the students' needs in every category.

All Primary and Secondary School classes work with iPads, implemented with an innovative evidence based approach. DISD students thrive in a multilingual environment and develop into true global citizens with the German language as a core competence. Many of the students reach a native speaker level in several languages, next to German, as well in English and Arabic. The city Dubai, region and the world serve as classrooms in stimulating national and international excursions and exchange programs.

For more information visit germanschool.ae.
Social Media: Facebook.com/germanschool.ae,
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UAE-Germany form joint task force to explore the potential of 4IR

- The German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce (AHK) acts as a bridge between the two business communities

BY OLIVER OEHMS
Special to GN Focus

The UAE has been home to a large number of German companies for many years. From large corporates to small and medium-sized firms, some 1,000 companies currently operate in the UAE. The strong presence of such a large number of German companies is not only proof of the excellent investment and business climate in the UAE, but also of the maturity of this market. German companies utilise the UAE not only as a hub for trade and logistics, but also to run critical services such as headquarters and R&D centres, for the region at large.

Emerging simultaneously with the growing business community in the Emirates, the German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce (AHK) was founded in 2009, building upon the successful establishment of two trade offices 10 years before. The Council forms part of the global network of German Chambers Abroad (AHKs – *Auslandshandelskammern* in German). As the first of its kind in the GCC region, it now comprises nearly 500 corporate members from both Germany and the UAE. With a team of 30 professional staff members across the region, and led by a honorary board of 18 C-level business representatives, the AHK acts as a bridge between the two business communities.

Surely, the current Covid-19 pandemic did



not leave the German business community in the UAE untouched. Nearly 80 per cent of the AHK members are expecting a drop in annual turnover this year. Most companies are struggling with making sure that its qualified teams weather the storm safely. In this regard, the challenges in the UAE are not very different from the ones in Germany – both economies are strongly depending on regional and international market developments, stable supply chains and smooth logistics. At the same time, the outlook for 2021 is equally slowly turning more positive. With industrial demand picking up again, the robust business communities in the two countries are ready for a quick rebound. This for sure will be happening in 2021, being driven by significant packages of additional liquidity in Germany or by a resilient and stress-resistant infrastructure and system in the UAE.

Retrospectively, the establishment of the Competence Centre for German Export Finance in the AHK by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and

Energy in September last year demonstrates a visionary move, while German export business in the MENA region has been benefitting from German government-backed guarantees for many years. Exporters, banks and local importers now have access to qualified support and advice on German ECA/Hermes-cover directly here in the region. With deteriorating financing conditions due to the pandemic, such instruments and support have become particularly important in insuring payment receipts for German exports.

Looking forward, there is significant potential for taking the bilateral business relations to another level. Covid-19 has been accelerating cultural change not only in the UAE, but also with regards to the future of the German-Emirati economic relations. Just to make it clear – yes, the excellent infrastructure of free zones will continue to be highly relevant as a hub for German products and services. But the new future will be digital – the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) bears enormous potentials for developing the UAE further as a global platform for future technologies and solutions. And Germany is ready to partner with its Emirati peers. A recently launched joint task force on 4IR will be presenting first outcomes soon. Stay tuned.

— The writer is CEO, German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce (AHK)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

crisis – received flak from policymakers and allies, although it has since been praised for its fiscal efforts.

The exceptional situation will see the country borrow €96.2 billion euros in 2021 to fund continued stimulus measures. Next year's budget will focus on economic support, securing employment and health protection, according to Finance Minister Olaf Scholz.

"We are acting decisively, even if it costs a lot of money – doing nothing would be much more expensive for our country," he said after the budget for 2021 was approved.

Scholz, who is in the running to succeed Merkel when she steps down after a general election next year, expects the German economy to return to its pre-crisis size by the beginning of 2022 at the very latest, and hopefully bring the deficit back in line with constitutional requirements.

Early reports indicate that their containment measures may lead to a V-shaped economic recovery, and economists are hopeful that the country has returned to growth in the third quarter.

The IFO's Business Climate index is almost back to pre-crisis levels in many sectors, as industrial activity has resumed following the easing of shutdown restrictions. The institute expects third-quarter GDP to grow by 6.6 per cent after a drop of 2 per cent and 9.7 per cent in the first and second quarters, respectively. While fourth-quarter performance appears uncertain, the country is expected to continue growing in 2021 with annual growth forecast at 5.1 per cent, possibly putting economic activity back to pre-pandemic levels by the end of next year. GDP will continue to expand in 2022, at an expected rate of 1.7 per cent.

Manufacturing, the country's economic backbone with about one-fifth of GDP, is forecast to drive much of the growth going forward, although services will likely remain underperforming. Output has continued to rise, posting the fastest growth since

February 2018. IHS Markit's final Purchasing Managers' Index rose to 52.2 in August, crossing the 50 mark that separates growth from contraction for the second time in 20 months.

Retail, on the other hand, exhibited a more nuanced picture. Although the sector boomed in May and June with shops reopening and VAT rates remaining low, sales fell unexpectedly in July – by 0.9 per cent, the federal statistics office reported. Nevertheless, in the first seven months of the year, retailers increased their sales by 2.6 per cent in real terms despite the



“

We look forward to Q2/Q3 in 2021 for the metal industry to slowly recover. Industries like construction are still doing well because of finishing jobs awarded in 2019 and before.”

David S Gower

Business owner

crisis. The HDE retail association now believes nominal sales will grow by 1.5 per cent this year, a sharp upward revision from its previous estimate for a 4 per cent drop, Reuters reported.

Other sectors may need more time.

David S Gower is owner of Newform, a foundry supplier of mica linings for furnaces in ferrous and non-ferrous foundries, as well as mica tapes for the cable and electrical HV motors industry. Speaking to *GN Focus* about the metal sector, he described the second and third quarters of this year as “horrible”, after a “perfect first quarter”.

"We look forward to Q2/Q3 in 2021 for the metal industry to slowly recover," he says. "Some industries like construction are still doing well because of finishing jobs awarded in 2019 and before." Gower is also President of TiE Germany, a non-profit organisation that promotes entrepreneurship.

Going forward, exports remain a particular area of concern, and hospitality, aviation and tourism and services may be in for a significant cold spell.

Ready for a second wave

For now, all attention is on a possible second wave of Covid-19, which could bring new lockdowns and a new reduction in economic activity. With coronavirus infections rising across Europe for weeks, Merkel warned that the daily number of new cases could hit 19,200, the German daily national newspaper *Bild* reported. By comparison, at the peak of the crisis in late March and early April, Germany was reporting more than



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6,000 new cases a day.

"Germany is trying to delay a possible lockdown as much as possible, while enforcing social distancing measures, TiE's Gower says. "However, with higher numbers of infections, the autumn and winter could be difficult to handle. If the second wave is anything like the first, companies will lose their market with-

out creative solutions. On the flip side, sectors dealing with digital and technological advances such as artificial intelligence, the internet of things and telehealth will do well."

Dr Philipp Scheuermeyer, an economist at the state-owned development bank KfW wrote in a recent paper that while previous experience will enable more

targeted and regional containment measures than in the spring, second-round effects such as business insolvencies would probably increase considerably. "As a risk scenario with local lockdowns in autumn and winter, we believe it is plausible to assume that Germany's economic output would contract by almost 8 per cent in 2020 and grow

by just +3 per cent in the next year," he said.

Beyond the coronavirus, however, several other significant events will affect Germany's economy. The possibility of the UK crashing out of the European Union without a deal remains another major risk, as does the prospect of an escalation of the trade and geopolitical conflict between the US and China consequent on the results of the US presidential election. "However, short-term negative impact on Germany would be relatively moderate," Dr Scheuermeyer wrote.

Any recovery could also be affected by an unlikely but not impossible surprise result in next autumn's federal election. Merkel has promised to step down after 15 years at the helm, but there is no clear successor in sight.

As what seems to be one of the most eventful years in history draws to a close, perhaps we should all look to another German phrase for the period ahead: Ich drücke die Daumen, goes the idiom. Translation? Fingers crossed. ■



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GORGEIOUS GERMANY

- The plethora of activities and experiences on offer make the European nation a top destination for all types of travellers



BY YAMINA SOFO
Special to GN Focus

WHERE HISTORY UNFOLDS

For those, who enjoy a journey back in time, Germany ticks all the boxes, with 25,000 castles and palaces spread all over the country. Surrounded by stunning landscapes, every castle has an interesting story to tell.

One of Germany's historic icons is Neuschwanstein Castle, located in the magnificent Bavarian Alps of south Germany. Also known as Germany's fairy tale castle, Neuschwanstein is one of the most frequently photographed attractions in the country.

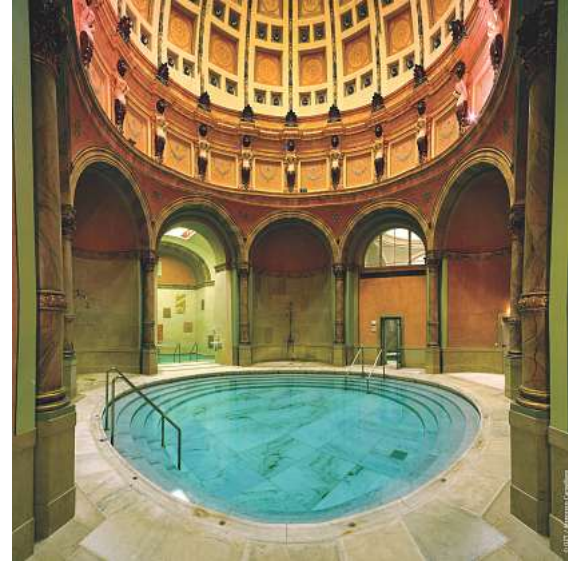
Another breathtaking palace is Moritzburg Palace in the city of Dres-

den. Situated on an island, you can access this palace only by walking on a tree-lined avenue. This palace is famous for being one of the most impressive baroque palaces in central Europe.

For history and culture lovers, eager to dive into the Middle Ages, a trip to the Castle Road will guarantee a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The Castle Road runs for almost 1,200km from the city of Mannheim, south west Germany and offers over 70 castles, fairy-tale palaces and stately homes and medieval masterpieces.

WELLNESS RETREATS

Whether by the sea, in the mountains or surrounded by green meadows and forests, Germany promises amazing relaxation and well-being experiences to all. Thanks to the diverse range of natural therapies with over 350 rated health resorts and spa towns combining traditional healing methods with modern medicines, Germany is known as an attractive destination for health travel.



● Thermal bath in Baden-Baden

One of the world's best-known healing spots is Baden-Baden, situated in southern Germany. The spa town offers 12 thermal springs where water bubbles up from a depth of 2,000 metres underground, making it an unforgettable experience.

● Moritzburg Palace in Dresden



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Shaima Al Habsi

Diplomat/Life coach

Shaima has lived in Berlin, Germany, for four years. Her German friends were the reason she started learning the language.

"I had many German friends during my work life and I just love listening to the language. So, I decided to learn it."



Sharath Thoniyot

IT Professional

Sharath has completed his A1 course and is now doing his A2 program. He is looking for new job opportunities in Germany.

"Even though the course is online we still do a lot of activities during the class which makes it easier for us to learn the language."



Rojan Kamel

Student

12-year-old Rojan is registered in an intermediate course. She has been finding the online courses **"very comfortable,"** as she is abiding by social distancing measures and staying safe.



Dana Rozmetova

Student

16-year-old Dana from Turkmenistan, is hoping to study architecture in Germany.

"I like online classes because they are more efficient, less time consuming and they are great for shy people like me."



Rubitha Souresh

Student

Rubitha has been admitted to one of the top universities in Germany, the Dresden University of Technology.

She has taken online courses with Goethe-Institut to prepare her for her dream career in Germany.



Shush Ramesh

Student

Shush is preparing to take on his dream of studying in Germany

"Online courses are a great experience as the teachers do it in an interactive way that gives a voice to each student."

GULF GERMAN FILM FESTIVAL

NOV 19 - 21, 2020 Cinema Akil, Dubai and streamed in the entire UAE.

GULF GERMAN FILM FESTIVAL



المهرجان السينمائي الألماني الخليجي

PRESENTED BY:



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Abu Dhabi



In the fall of 2020 Abu Dhabi and Dubai will see the first edition of the GULF GERMAN FILM FESTIVAL.

"Screening groundbreaking new German language movies, ranging from art-house films to box-office hits, and from children's matinees to late-night movies, this star-studded event invites an audience of all stripes.", says Fareed Majari, Director of the Goethe-Institut Gulf Region.

In Abu Dhabi, the GULF GERMAN FILM FESTIVAL will open with the award-winning film, *Gundermann*, by acclaimed director Andreas Dresen, who will also be present via a digital Q&A at the opening night. Focusing on the extraordinary and contradictory life of East German singer/songwriter Gerhard Gundermann, Dresen's film was an audience favorite and box office success in Germany.

In Dubai, the GULF GERMAN FILM FESTIVAL will kick off with *Undine* by Christian Petzold, one of Germany's most beloved auteurs. The film premiered at this year's Berlin Film Festival and is a 21st century makeover of the old folk tale of the water nymph who will kill her lover, should he ever betray her.

Undine | © Marco Krüger Schramm Film



- Germany has hiking trails for every ability level

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Germany has plenty of adventure activities for tourists of all ages. From family-friendly attractions covering 100 theme parks, 300 zoos and 100 wildlife parks and nature reserves to recreational activities such as paragliding, sightseeing, cycling tours, kayaking, or hiking in the mountains, Germany has definitely something for everyone. With a well-connected public transport system throughout the country, visitors enjoy an easy and quick access between cities and rural areas whether by train, bus or by taxi.

Travellers can also discover Germany by bike through its 200 cycle routes spanning over 70,000 kilometres that offer stunning views of the country,

from the unique Black Forest and the Alps in the south, the lakes and rivers in the countryside to the beautiful beaches and islands in the north.

CULINARY EXPERIENCES

Located in the heart of Europe, Germany has always welcomed European and international influences to its cuisine, but at the same time it has preserved its traditional recipes that were handed down from generation to generation.

One of the authentic culinary treats in Germany is the white asparagus, known as the vegetable of kings or white gold. While green as-



- White asparagus is a rare spring delicacy

paragus is available all year round, white asparagus can only be tasted during a short season, between April and June every year, presenting a unique flavour experience.

Black Forest cake is another must-try in Germany. While this chocolate dessert has many myths surrounding its origin, one thing is certain. This famous cake that took the world by storm is a product of Baden-Württemberg, where it was first made over a century ago and where bakers have been refining it ever since.

Food enthusiasts exploring one or more of Germany's 16 regions will enjoy an exquisite culinary journey, whether at its traditional inns or at one of the 300 Michelin-starred gourmet restaurants spread all over the country.

Visit Germany.travel for more information.

The writer is the Director Sales and Marketing, German National Tourist Office Gulf Countries



- Germany has over 200 scenic cycle routes through towns, mountains and villages



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Germany's premium paint brand, Caparol Paints began its relationship with the UAE in 1999 with a vision to contribute to the region's landscape with its technologically advanced sustainable and environmentally friendly paint solutions. Caparol is committed to developing solutions that contribute to comfortable and healthy living spaces based on the vision "Everyone should be living and working in healthy, well-designed, efficient and sustainably constructed buildings".

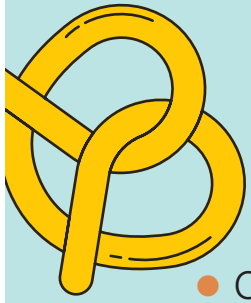
Walls of interior spaces are a common source of contamination and infection spread as they could be infested with bacteria, virus and other microbes. Recently, keeping true to the commitment of contributing to the society, Caparol's expert team pledged to join the fight against Coronavirus that has brought the world to a halt over the past 8 months.

Caparol's latest innovation - CapaCare Protect is a specially formulated interior emulsion with unique patented SILVERbac® technology that uses active,

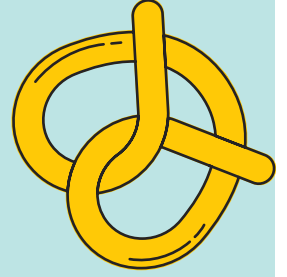
naturally occurring silver ions to persistently inhibit the growth of Coronavirus on the coated surface. CapaCare Protect is the only paint in the region that has shown 99.9% kill rate against Human Coronavirus with test reports as per American and Japanese standards from two independent ISO 17025 laboratories in the USA approved and accredited by International Anti-microbial council. CapaCare Protect has zero odour and zero VOC which contributes to enhancing Indoor Air Quality and is eco-friendly as it is completely free of Lead, Ammonia, APEO and Formaldehyde.

CapaCare Protect is highly washable, easy to clean and maintain and is recommended for hospitals, schools, malls, restaurants and all living spaces. It has been used in DAFZA (Dubai Airport Free Zone authority), Gems School, Saudi German Hospital, Dubai London Hospital, Rashid Center of Disability, Sofitel JBR and many such high profile projects across the Middle East.





HABEN SIE HUNGER?



● Check out traditional German dishes that you need to try at home

BRATKARTOFFELN

Prep **30 mins**
Cook **1 hour**
Serves **6**

INGREDIENTS

- 2kg potatoes, thinly sliced
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 6 slices beef bacon, chopped
- ½ cup butter, diced
- salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 200 °C. Grease an ideally 9x13 inch casserole dish with oil.
2. Place potatoes neatly in greased dish. Sprinkle onion and beef bacon over potatoes, then dot with butter. Cover dish with foil.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 45



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minutes. Remove foil and stir potatoes. Turn oven to broiler setting and allow potatoes to brown for about five minutes,

until crispy. You may need to stir every minute or so to achieve even browning. Serve immediately.



Camera Press

HOME-MADE PRETZEL ROLLS

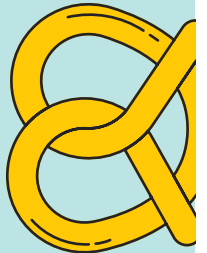
Prep **1 hour, 15 mins**
Cook **20 mins**
SERVES **3-4**

INGREDIENTS

- 300g cake flour, plus extra
- 2 tsp sea salt
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 10g instant dry yeast
- ½ cup milk, warmed
- ¼ to ½ cup warm water
- 3 tbsp oil
- 1/3 cup bicarbonate of soda
- 1 egg, beaten, for brushing
- 2 tbsp coarse salt, for topping

METHOD

1. In a large bowl, mix together the flour, sea salt, sugar and yeast. In a jug, whisk together milk, water and oil, add to the dry ingredients and stir to form a soft dough.
2. Add a little more water, if needed. On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough for 5-10 minutes until smooth. Place in a bowl, cover with a damp tea towel and leave to prove for one hour or until it doubles in size.
3. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Knock back the dough and divide into six even portions. Roll each piece into a long sausage and shape into pretzels. Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in a saucepan of boiling water. Carefully dip each pretzel in the hot water for about a minute, then drain and place on a greased baking tray.
4. Brush the pretzels with the beaten egg and sprinkle coarse salt on top. Bake for 15 minutes or until dark golden brown and baked through.
5. Serve hot with mustard, salad and pickle on the side.



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SAUERBRATEN

Prep **15 mins**
Cook **4 hours**
Serves **6**

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg beef rump roast
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 1 cup vinegar, or to taste
- 1 cup water
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tbsp ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp white sugar
- 10 whole cloves, or more to taste
- 2 bay leaves, or more to taste

- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 10 gingersnap cookies, crumbled

METHOD

1. Place beef rump roast, onions, vinegar, water, salt, black pepper, sugar, cloves, and bay leaves in a large pot. Cover and refrigerate for two to three days, turning meat daily. Remove meat from marinade and pat dry with paper towels, reserving marinade.
2. Season flour to taste with salt and black pepper in a large bowl. Sprinkle flour mixture over beef.
3. Heat vegetable oil in a large oven or pot over medium heat; cook beef until brown on all sides, for about 10 minutes.
4. Pour reserved marinade over beef, cover, and reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until beef is tender for 3.5 to four hours. Remove beef to a platter and slice.
5. Strain the remaining liquid and continue cooking over medium heat. Add gingersnap cookies and simmer for about 10 minutes until gravy is thickened. Serve gravy over sliced beef.



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“We felt obliged to react and give something back to the country”

● When WHO declared the Covid-19 pandemic, Verotex Gulf acted fast to produce masks made of antimicrobial fabrics. We talk to **Heike Scholz-Reinhard**, the company's Managing Director on how the fabric counters the settlement and growth of microorganisms

Can you give us a brief history of Verotex?

Verotex weaving mill was founded 27 years ago as a result of a yarn we developed in our spinning mill. The intention of our founder had always been, and still is safety, comfort and kindness to the environment. It started with a range of fabrics, including Verosafe, which is PVC-free, inherently flame retardant and has no additional chemical finishes.

At that time all roller blinds and vertical blind fabrics needed a coating to stiffen them, and we were the first company to combine design and safety with environmentally friendly fabrics. All our fabrics are produced at our facility in Germany to secure consistent quality and smooth logistics. From our first range, Verosafe, we then developed Veroglim (high reflection screens for computer working stations), Veroflex (mostly blackout coated fabrics) and Veromed, to the highest industry standards.

How did the idea of Veromed fabrics form?

Veromed was developed five years ago as a direct result of our market research in the UAE and the huge demand for antimicrobial fabrics in the healthcare sector. The fabric contains a biocidal product. It's also called silver ion technology that is built into the fibre polymer to counter the growth of microorganisms in or on the fabric. It is machine washable up to 60°C with fine detergent without losing the bioactive character. Its brand name is Veromed Trevira CS Bioactive and this fibre is patented.

The idea was to come up with a fabric that fulfilled the needs of the healthcare sector, meaning it had to be antimicrobial, flame retardant and durable, but which should be not affected by washing or usage. Veromed offers all the possible safety – viruses and bacteria cannot grow on that fabric, it is flame retardant, it does not use any additional coatings or finishes, it is washable up to 60°C, all while completely free of any toxic substances. With a light fastness of six to seven it never fades, retains its shape even under the toughest of conditions and is offered in many different designs and colours.

These fabrics can be particularly used for cubicle beds and window curtains as well blind systems in hospitals, which are constantly being touched by so many different people all day. The Veromed material makes it possible to develop appropriate measures to prevent cross-contamination in medical environments.

How does the fabric guarantee the death of Covid-19 viruses on the surface?

Trevira CS Bioactive is a fibre made of a polymer that has a silver ion embedded in its molecular structure. This silver ion makes it impossible for bacteria and viruses to grow



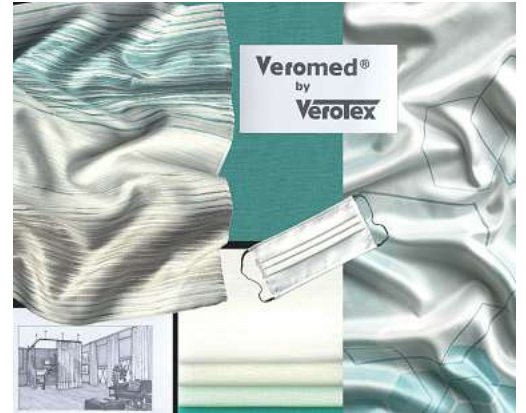
● Heike Scholz-Reinhard, Managing Director, Verotex Gulf

in fabrics that are woven out of Trevira CS Bioactive fibre. Also, all our fabrics are tried at independent institutes in Europe. We have tested this fabric range for several standards in flame retardancy and an extensive range of bacteria and viruses, including Covid and Pox viruses.

What can these fabrics be used for? Are they only for hospital use?

Veromed fabrics are presently used mainly for the health care sector, while Verosafe is usually used for commercial projects, such as offices, hotels and schools. But times have changed. If there is a chance to improve safety, why not use it? Veromed also has other benefits, for instance, bacteria cannot grow on it.

The fabric also does not develop mold, or carry the typical moldy odours you find in damp, old houses or hotels due to Chloroanisole (a bacterium that develops because of humidity). That's not all, our PVC-free fabric range of Veromed and Verosafe is not to be underestimated. In case of fire, PVC releases a harmful chlorine gas (dioxin) and you have only few minutes to leave the premises before suffering serious injuries.



How are your reusable face masks different from the ones available in the market?

In the beginning of February, when WHO declared the Coronavirus pandemic, the Dubai government didn't have enough safety equipment. We, as Verotex Gulf, felt obliged to react and give something back to the country to protect its citizens. We started producing the reusable Veromed face masks, for which we got a lot of support from our partner the Dubai Airport Free Zone Authority (DAFZA).

The idea of making comfortable masks, using a fabric that is already tested against bacteria and viruses and does not have any harmful substances made sense. The standard disposable masks, which are being promoted and sold to the general public are made for non-intensive medical usage and are for one-time use only. But once you put it on, or touch it in case you come in contact with the virus, contamination will spread all over the mask. This seemed too risky. Furthermore, you have to change these masks after three to four hours. This is a few million masks each day, so what about the waste? When it comes Veromed masks, you need two to three, so you can rotate them with your laundry.

What tests were conducted to prove the efficacy of the product?

We test all our products in independent high-grade institutes in Germany, France and the UK. The trials have been conducted for flame retardancy, antimicrobial and antiviral standards such as DIN4102, EN1021, ISO18184.2019, and Oekotex 100.

What's next for the company?

In 2021, we will be launching our new range, VeroBlue (named after our home, The Blue Planet), which is made of 100 per cent recycled material, and features all the attributes that make our range of fabrics such a great choice. Furthermore, we will also launch VeroDur, a range of super durable fabrics for outdoor applications, which are also 100 per cent PVC-free.



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● Football is the most popular form of sport in Germany, with a national team that mirrors the country's aspirations in being the best in everything it does

Germany strikes the right sporting chords

● With its astounding merits in the sporting arena, there can be no doubt about the assets Germany has displayed over the years, says **Alaric Gomes**

The longest word in the standard German dictionary reportedly is 'Kraftfahrzeug-Haftpflichtversicherung' that actually simply stands for 'motor vehicle liability insurance'.

So, when it comes to judging Germany — the hitherto divided East and West or the unified nation based on its astounding merits in the sporting arena, there can be no doubt about the assets Germany has displayed over the years.

Goal achieved

Football is undoubtedly the most popular spectator sport in Germany. And to complement this growth, the country boasts of an estimated 26,000 clubs and 178,000 teams.

Germany's top level football league, called the Bundesliga, boasts having among the highest average attendances when compared to any association football leagues in the world; among all professional sports leagues, with its average attendance standing only second to

American football's NFL.

As a top-notch professional competition, the Bundesliga stands third in UEFA Rankings at the end of the 2019-2020 season. These rankings are based on the performance of clubs in the UEFA Champions League — won by FC Bayern Munich — and the UEFA Europa League.

No wonder Bayern Munich or 'Bayern Munchen' is among the most successful football clubs with 30 national championships — including an unbeaten run of eight suc-

cessive crowns since 2013 — 20 National Cups and six European Champions titles (three each of the European Cups and UEFA Champions Leagues).

In terms of revenue, Bayern Munich is the largest sports club in Germany and the fourth highest-earning football club in the world while generating €660.1 million (Dhs 2.8 billion) in 2020. During the 2018-'19 season, Bayern reported a revenue of €750.4 million (Dhs 3.22 billion) and an operating profit of €146.1

million — recording its 27th consecutive year with profits.

Germany's national football team has fed off the success of highly-successful clubs such as Bayern Munich, in particular. Germany has been one of the traditional powers on the international football stage having won the FIFA World Cup on four occasions — in 1954, 1974, 1990 and 2014.

Germany also hosted the World Cup for the first time in 1974 and then again in 2006, when



● The Allianz Stadium is home to FC Bayern Munich, one of the most successful football clubs in the game's history, having won six European Championships and 20 National Cups

it went on to lose a close semi-final to eventual champions, Italy guided by Fabio Cannavaro.

Naturally, Germany has been a dominant force in football on the European stage as well with wins in the UEFA European Championship in 1972 and 1980 (although as West Germany). The next big step for Germany will be hosting the 2024 UEFA Euro.

Germany also won the FIFA Confederations Cup for the first and only time in 2017. Over the years, Miroslav Klose has kept his record as the leading goal scorer for the national team with 71 goals, but his fame has been pushed into the background by the more loved Franz Beckenbauer – one of the few players in the world who have won the World Cup both as a coach and player.

All hands on deck

The women's national football team is not to be underestimated as the squad has two back-to-back successes to its name at the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2003 and 2007. This makes Germany the only nation so far to win both the men's and women's World Cup and European titles – a rari-

ty for a nation where the centre of attention is usually the men's game.

Together with Denmark, Germany is regarded as the birthplace of handball with the first official handball match played in Berlin, on October 29, 1917. No wonder that handball is widely regarded as the second most popular team

sport in Germany behind football. In fact, it was Berlin handball trainer Carl Schelenz who developed most of the rules of modern handball.

Set the bar

Ice hockey is one of Germany's more popular sports, but a distant second behind football and handball as far as following goes. There are many leagues, but the top one is the 14-team Deutsche Eishockey Liga (DEL). Over the years, Germany has earned its position as No.8 on the world rankings

with the DEL producing world-class players, some of them even venturing out successfully into the NHL ranks.

Together with football, ice hockey and handball, basketball is among the most popular spectator sports in Germany. Led by the Basketball Bundesliga, one of the most famous players coming out of Germany is Dirk Nowitzki who played as power forward for the Dallas Mavericks during his 21-year career in the NBA. In 2007, Nowitzki became the first player trained totally outside the US to be named league MVP, and in 2011, he led the Mavericks to their first NBA title and earned a Finals MVP doing so.

In the realm on individual sports, tennis occupies the top-most step. And Boris Becker and Steffi Graf are most instantly the first stars.

Becker became the youngest champion in the history of men's singles at Wimbledon in 1985, after which he went on to add another five Grand Slam singles titles including another two Wimbledon crowns, two Australian Open and an US Open. Becker also has a doubles Olympic gold medal with fellow German, Michael Stich.

Graf, on the other hand, blazed a career that included 22 Grand Slam singles titles, and in 1988, she became the first and only tennis player (male or fe-

male) to achieve the Calendar Year Golden Slam by winning all four Grand Slam singles titles and the Olympic gold medal in the same calendar year.

Powering through

The world of motorsports is synonymous with three F1 champions – Michael Schumacher, Sebastian Vettel and Nico Rosberg – accounting a combined 12 crowns. And when Schumacher retired for a second time in 2012, he had a record seven world titles.

In 2010, Vettel became the youngest driver ever to win the world championship – something he successfully defended for the next three years in 2011, 2012 and 2013. And in 2016, Rosberg became the third German driver to win the Formula One World Championship.

Ever heard of Bandy? It's a team winter sport played on ice, in which skaters use sticks to direct a ball into the goal.

It now transpires that Bandy was played in Germany in the early 20th century, but the players and audiences then turned to football and ice hockey instead. The sport has been reintroduced with the establishment of the German Bandy Association in 2013 and a national championship in place every winter since 2014-'15.

Kraftfahrzeug-Haftpflichtversicherung anyone?



● Michael Schumacher, possibly one of the most successful drivers in F1 history, has won a record seven world titles



TOWN OPENS DOORS TO MIGRANTS

- Space used to house asylum seekers back in 2015 is being freed up as migrants move to more permanent homes making space to take in more newcomers

BY YANNICK PASQUET

The town of Neuruppin may be nestled in an eastern part of Germany where the far-right AfD party enjoys some of its strongest support.

But it is offering to take in refugees again, five years after a huge migrant influx bitterly divided the country.

"We have room for 50 to 75 people," Jens-Peter Golde, the mayor of the 31,000-strong town, told AFP.

"We are doing well here and we have the possibility (to help) people in need."

At the height of the EU's migrant crisis in 2015, Angela Merkel announced that Germany's borders would not be closed to any refugees, a move hailed as historic by some but blamed by others for the subsequent rise in far-right nationalism.

The country has since taken in more than one million asylum seekers.

The thorny issue of immigration in Europe has shot to the top of the bloc's political agenda again, however, after a huge fire destroyed the biggest refugee camp in Greece, in Moria on the island of Lesbos.

Rights activists have urged EU governments to take in the 12,000 people left without shelter in the aftermath of the blaze, again raising the contentious question of how many refugees each country should be responsible for. Merkel's government has said Germany is prepared to take in around

1,500 people in all, including some from the burnt-down Moria camp. And out of the country's 2,000-plus towns and cities, some 173 — including 16 in the east — have written to Berlin offering their help.

Mayor Golde said Neuruppin's experience from five years ago showed that the town could make it work this time, too.

Space used to house asylum seekers back in 2015 was now being freed up as migrants move to more permanent homes.

And that meant there was room to take in newcomers, he said.

"When you see the pictures in Moria, it is not a question of politics, it is a question of morals," Golde said.

The new workforce

And not only that, it is about economics, too. In 2015, the arrival of refugees proved a boon for entrepreneurs in the region.

"Local businesses are chasing the workforce," according to Martin Osinski, former head of 18 asylum seekers' hostels in the area, who remembers small and medium-sized business owners literally knocking on their doors in search of labour.

Some 1,550 foreigners — including Syrians, Chechens and Poles — currently live in Neuruppin.

And the care sector in particular is one area where migrants are in high demand. "I want to live in a town that is open to the world and that provides protec-

tion and care for people who have fled war or famine," said Beate Schaedler, a specialist in social pedagogy.

Nevertheless, integrating newcomers continues to be a challenge in the town where the far-right AfD won one in five votes in state elections of Brandenburg last year.

AFD's lead candidate in the area, Klaus Baumdick, did not respond to AFP's request for an interview.

But the party's leaders have suggested that resettling migrants from Greek camps would only incite "arsonists" to set fire to other camps in the hope of being sent to Germany.

Wolfgang Freese, a teacher, concedes there were "difficulties and we mustn't deny them." He said that some of his colleagues felt uncomfortable teaching refugee pupils.

On top of the problem of housing, some residents have expressed concern about the migrants' willingness to integrate themselves into the community, complaining, for example, that some men arriving from patriarchal countries were reluctant to see their wives learn the language of the host country.

But mayor Golde dismisses such criticism. "You will always find people who say 'we are obliged to sleep under bridges and they are entitled to the best flats'. But that is pure populism! I don't know anyone in Neuruppin who sleeps under bridges," he said.

— AFP



CAPAROL PAINTS

CapaStone — The original stone finish paint in the Middle East

Caparol has become the synonym of high-quality in the world of sustainable and innovative coatings/thermal insulation systems and is the leading company for facade solutions in the Middle East. Sustainability is at the core of Caparol's philosophy and strategy, requiring continuous research and development and focus on leading topics of aesthetics, functionality, ecology and energy efficiency relevant to the region.

Caparol's CapaStone is an exquisite range of breathtaking natural stone-like finish. CapaStone is essentially a water-based paint consisting of crushed in-organic

coloured aggregates bound with a pure acrylic resin binder for exterior and interior walls. It uses Nano-quartz matrix technology (NQG) that prevents the adhesion of dust and sand particles on its surface, leaving the surface clean and easy to maintain over a long period of time.

NQG offers maximum resistance to dust particles from the air and prevents algae and fungal attack. Other benefits of this advanced technology include protection against harsh climate and a highly enduring finish, which looks like natural stone.

CapaStone is a rich, premium decorative solution for facades, lobbies, corridors or special ar-

chitectural areas, which adds beauty to any wall. CapaStone has been a product of choice for a lot of clients looking to decorate their villas, town houses, premium lofts and luxury homes.

CapaStone is truly an inspirational all-around solution with excellent aesthetic finish and remarkable consistency. It has earned a great reputation

in the Middle East for being the original stone-finish paint, which offers a genuine natural stone-like appearance.

The paint is inspired by the natural scenic beauty and landscapes of the Middle East. CapaStone has been in the market for more than 20 years and has been the No. 1 stone paint in the region for over two decades.



MENA LEGAL

Five minutes with Dr Alexander Brexendorff, Founder, MENA Legal



Happiness

I met my wife Ana-Maria in the Emirates 7 years ago and instantly sensed her extraordinary mix of Orient and Occident and that she was the one I could raise a family in the "desert" with. Since then our family has grown to six and we are permanently inspired by the experience of parenthood.

Values

I can trace my family history through 900 years of Prussian-German values passed through the generations and practice the law and live my life with integrity and resilience. I value many qualities in the Arabic and Emirati culture, especially when it comes to family bonds and tradition. I grew up in East Germany with strong community and social values, which I cherish and integrate into my business philosophy.

German and UAE business links

It always makes me proud to know my law firm has helped so many international companies, entrepreneurs and investors to do successful business in the Middle East and that together with my partners I have pioneered numerous outstanding projects in the region.

Dr Alexander Brexendorff is the founder of MENA Legal and the Swiss and Dubai headquartered international business consultancy, Brexendorff & Associates, trusted lawyers and business consultants of the German Embassy and Consulate in the UAE and the German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce.

GOETHE-INSTITUT

Series rush — Binge fever with Netflix



● Robert Finster plays the title role in the epic Netflix series Freud

Television Made in Germany is having a golden moment with the rise of international streaming services. German series that appeal to global audiences through smart and original writing, diverse themes, talented lineups and opulent productions have never received so much attention.

Many of these highlight binge-worthy German serials are available on Netflix and other streaming provider in the UAE. In our dossier we will fill you in on the most addictive German series. They are subtitled in English and also a great opportunity to learn German.

www.goethe.de/gulf



GERMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ABU DHABI

German International Schools of the UAE wish everyone good health and to stay safe during the pandemic

The three German International Schools of the UAE, situated respectively in Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Dubai would like to wish everyone good health.

We wish to express the most heartfelt thanks to each and every one of our school communities. The students and parents for their cooperation and understanding, and the schools' staff who is setting an extraordinary example of commitment and professionalism to continuously offer excellent teaching regardless of the challenges the pandemic has presented us.

The safety of our students, staff, and all families is our top priority. We have made it our mission to not only be responsible for the well-being of our students during this pandemic,



ic, but to rise and be good role models for everyone. By ensuring safety standards and health precautions on a daily basis we

hope to impart on our students what communal responsibility is — we are in this together.

We give thanks and gratitude

to the compassionate and sovereign approach of His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and His Highness Dr Shaikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, and to the UAE's first line of defense, the medical staff, doctors, nurses and armed forces and to all those who are actively fighting this global pandemic. We are certain that the UAE will emerge from this crisis stronger.

We wish all schools, students and teachers a successful and safe academic year 2020/21 despite the challenges that we must face.

SCHOEN CLINIC

Covid-19 and the long path back to life

Artificial respiration, intensive care unit or coma – many corona patients are hard-hit. Even after they are discharged from hospital, they are not yet completely healthy, but struggle with the late effects of the infection. The coronavirus not only attacks the lungs, but also damages organs like the heart or brain.

The long-term consequences can be serious and require targeted, comprehensive treatment. Germany's largest family-run hospital group, Schoen Clinic, which has a long tradition of

treating patients from the UAE, has developed a unique treatment plan for post-Covid rehabilitation. The programme is open for international patients.

So far, more than 84,500 people have been infected with Covid-19 in the UAE. While most get through an infection relatively unscathed, in severe cases the disease can have serious long-term consequences. "To be recovered does not mean you are healthy," stresses Professor Andreas Rembert Koczulla, Chief Physician of the Department of Pneumology at Schoen Clin-

ic Berchtesgadener Land. "Even after the infection has subsided, lung function and physical performance can be impaired." Therefore, some "recovered" patients require expert follow-up care and rehabilitation. Following the disease, lung function is often not yet restored, and patients experience reduced physical performance. In addition, damage to organs like the heart and brain may appear.

Many patients suffer from diverse neurological symptoms ranging from tiredness or fatigue to impairments of the sense of

smell and taste disorders. Patients with pre-existing cardiovascular disease have an increased risk of severe disease and worse outcomes.

Schoen Clinic hospitals Berchtesgadener Land, Bad Aibling and Vogtareuth – all located in the Munich area – have merged their expertise to provide a comprehensive state-of-the-art rehabilitation plan. The programme is tailored to the needs of patients from the UAE and is open to international patients. More information can be found at <https://www.schoen-clinic.com/>.



WINTERSHALL DEA

Delivering as a proud partner for ADNOC and the UAE

German-based Wintershall Dea is Europe's leading independent gas and oil company. Headquartered in Kassel and Hamburg, the company is operational worldwide, including in the UAE. Since acquiring a stake in the Ghasha Concession – a huge gas project off the shores of Abu Dhabi – Wintershall Dea has become one of the largest German investors in the Emirates.

The Ghasha mega-project is expected to produce 1.5 billion

cubic metres of gas a day when it comes on stream around the middle of the decade, significant in a region where demand is expected to rise in the mid to long term.

Wintershall Dea brings not just significant financial investment to the Ghasha Project, but a commitment to sharing its technical experience and skills. The company has a long heritage of 'Made in Germany' engineering excellence. That makes it a perfect match for the UAE and ADNOC,

itself a front runner for advanced technology and excellence. As Helge Beuthan, Wintershall Dea's Managing Director for the Middle East explains: "The UAE has a strong 'future-focus' and is a leader in areas like digitalisation and artificial intelligence. It's very satisfying to work with ADNOC, to share our expertise in efficient and responsible energy production, and to learn from what they are doing as well."

2020 is a special year for Win-

tershall Dea in the UAE, marking ten years since the company first arrived in Abu Dhabi.

"We've come a long way since first establishing a representative office here in 2010. Today we are stepping up to deliver Ghasha, one of the world's largest energy projects, as a partner to ADNOC. While the Covid-19 pandemic means there'll be no big party this year, we are proud of what we are achieving here," Beuthan adds.



TM

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MENA LEGAL - BREXENDORFF & ASSOCIATES

Building meaningful relationships across the globe for 2 decades. Clients working with us receive analytical and strategic support from in-house experts in legal and business matters. Our trusted Global Council is highly regarded and our services comprehensive.



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