



Gulf Traffic Exhibition and Conference
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upfront

TheNational



GreenParking's Robot Ray is tailored to fit into existing structures so car parks do not need alterations. Courtesy GreenParking

Drivers, meet Ray, the silicon valet

Gulf Traffic closes with bow from high tech forklift system

Ramola Talwar Badam

DUBAI // Ray, the robot concierge, could be parking your car if you depart from an airport in the UAE in the near future if a team of flexible, intelligent forklifts is signed up by authorities. The system, currently being used in sections of Düsseldorf airport, was unveiled in the region on the final day of the Gulf Traffic conference yesterday. Different to automated park-

ing systems where a factory-like facility is purpose built, this uses existing car parks with robot additions. "Imagine a forklift that takes your car into a normal car park and stacks cars next to each other. Since we reduce driveways, we achieve 60 per cent more cars parked in the same space," said Sam Alsway, chief executive of GreenParking, a parking management company that represents Serva, the German manufacturer system. "We are talking to airports in the UAE and also to airports in the region," he said, declining to name them for reasons of commercial confidentiality. The new system involves a

passenger dropping their car in a zone where cameras scan its height, weight and licence plates. Using a touchscreen, the passenger fills in details about departure and arrival flights so the system can link with airport information systems. Then Robot Ray uses three-dimensional scans, adjusts to the size of the vehicle, lifts it and takes it to be parked. GreenParking is also discussing baggage drop-offs. Cost is estimated at between Dh7 million and Dh8m. Enhancements would cost extra. The launch drew interest from conference visitors. "This is pretty good because you can retrofit existing garag-

es," said Dave Hill, international representative of the International Parking Institute, USA. "Drive-outs and ramps take up 50 per cent of garage space. It is probably expensive but there are savings in areas where land value is high, like Downtown Dubai." Blake Laufer, vice president research for T2 Systems, Canada, said the challenge would be handling a surge in demand. "When you have a large number of people coming to get cars at the same time, you would still be limited by the number of robots and bays where cars can be accessed."

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UAE and China to rewrite relations

Mohammed bin Zayed's visit to Beijing will include range of agreements in areas including trade, security and telecoms

Caline Malek

ABU DHABI // A new page in the UAE's relationship with China will be written during the three-day visit by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, starting on Sunday.

Dr Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of State, said yesterday that a range of agreements in finance, investment, logistics, energy, education and technology would be signed during the visit by Sheikh Mohammed, also Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

The Crown Prince will meet president Xi Jinping and senior officials in his third trip to the country.

"This visit comes at a critical time," Dr Al Jaber said. "The UAE and China have been able to establish a very strong, deeply rooted relationship, well founded in areas like political, economic, trade, military and security."

"This visit will act as a paradigm shift in this whole relationship and a new platform where we will all give our best efforts to help enhance it, while we engage in identifying and creating new avenues and cooperation areas."

He said deeper involvement with China would further contribute to the UAE's economic development and open investment opportunities in areas including renewable energy, telecommunications, infrastructure, rail, aerospace and finance.

"Our main aim through this visit is to ensure that we elevate the common economic and political interests across the visit's agenda," Dr Al Jaber said.

"It will provide a vital opportunity to build on mutual interests... which will allow for long-term stability, security and prosperity in the broader region. Bilateral trade in 1984 was about US\$63 million (Dh2.1bn)."

"The current figures for 2015 stand at around \$54.8 billion, and trade has increased by 16 per cent annually for the past six years. With 2,200 Chinese companies registered in the UAE, the country is the largest Middle East market for Chinese products."

He said the aim of the visit was to "enhance such numbers, increase them and create new avenues for cooperation that will allow for this relationship to be expanded strategically, benefit both countries and creating a positive spillover on the regional economy".

Last April, the UAE became a founding partner of the Asian Investment and Infrastructure Bank.

"We are a big and key supporter of the One Belt, One Road strategy," Dr Al Jaber said. "It is China's primary foreign and domestic growth policy vehicle that focuses on facilitating trade, investment and diplomatic ties in central Asia."

"We find the UAE to be a natural partner for this very important initiative."

He said it would have a direct impact on improving economic and trade ties across Asia. "In our view, it is comprehensive, holistic in its nature, progressive, inclusive and we are a committed partner to it," he said.

"The UAE-China relationship is extremely high on our agenda from a political, economic and strategic point of view."

China relies on the Middle East for its oil imports and energy, making regional stability a concern for Beijing.

"I am confident that this visit will be useful for both sides to further connect their development strategies and make achievements in friendly cooperation," said Chang Hua, China's ambassador to the UAE.

"China has long viewed the UAE as a major partner for cooperation in the Middle East and the Gulf. Bilateral trade hit a new high and our cooperation in energy, finance and investment projects has been fruitful."

Dr Theodore Karasik, a geopolitical analyst, said the UAE's position at the crossroads between Asia, Europe and Africa made it extremely important to China.

"Given that the UAE is at the centre of Beijing's plans for economic expansion and growth, it's only natural that the leadership of the UAE would be visiting Beijing at this time," Dr Karasik said.

He said talks on security would be important, as China is increasing its presence and interest in affairs in the Levant and the GCC.

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Abdullah lashes out at ISIL

→ Minister, continued from 1

Abdulkhaleq Abdullah, a professor of political science, said it was a good first step but there needed to be a more concerted effort to tackle extremism in the region.

"It's not something that the UAE or US can do alone, there has to be a broader, more concerted effort to counter ISIL," he said.

Dr Theodore Karasik, a UAE security analyst, also welcomed the campaign. "This is the first of many social-media initiatives that will be seeking to disrupt and mitigate ISIL's ideology," he said.

The Sawab Centre works with people and organisations around the world to counter ISIL propaganda and reveal the true criminal nature and intent of the extremist group. The word Sawab in Arabic signifies "doing the right thing" or being on the "right path".

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