

BENEFIT gets PCI DSS certification for security

● **BENEFIT implementing controls that exceeded the standards of the previous version**

TDI | Manama

BENEFIT, a prominent Fin-tech and electronic financial transactions service provider, announced it has achieved the Payment Card Industry Data



Security Standard (PCI DSS) Version 4.0 Certification, making it one of the first companies in the Kingdom to do so.

“By implementing this updated version, security measures designed to protect cardholder data from a number of potential risks and attacks will be strengthened even more

ALI BESHARA

This achievement follows BENEFIT implementing controls that exceeded the standards of the previous version, PCI DSS v.3.2.1.

The new standard includes a range of enhancements, such as increased guidance on adopting security controls, stronger compliance activities, improved payment validation methods and procedures, updated password requirements, more rigorous testing procedures, a greater focus on cybersecurity activities, as well as an increased

frequency of security controls testing.

PCI DSS 4.0 aims to provide an increasingly robust and comprehensive framework for securing payment card data.

Ali Beshara, Head of Information Security and Risk Management at BENEFIT, highlighted the significance of this achievement, stating, “This new standard gives our clients the assurance that we fully comply with PCI DSS requirements and that their financial transaction data is processed securely.”

“By implementing this updated version, security measures designed to protect cardholder data from a number of potential risks and attacks will be strengthened even more,” he added.

PCI DSS is a globally recognised information security management standard that incorporates security policies, procedures, and technical controls to ensure that all businesses that receive, store, process, or transmit credit card information operate in a secure environment.

Iraq launches new oil refinery to reduce imports

● **Refinery has the capacity to refine 140,000 barrels per day**

● **Refinery built by South Korean firm Hyundai**

● **Could produce nine million litres of fuel a day**

● **The refinery also has the capacity to produce 200 megawatts of electricity**



Representative picture (Courtesy of AL Monitor)

Karbala, Iraq

Iraq inaugurated an oil refinery in the central city of Karbala yesterday, a project the government hopes will reduce its dependency on imports.

Oil Minister Hayan Abdel Ghani announced the refinery had begun “commercial production” after a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani.

It has the capacity to refine 140,000 barrels per day and “help meet local demand for petrol, kerosene and heating oil, while reducing imports”, Abdel Ghani said.

Despite its immense oil and gas reserves, Iraq remains dependent on imports to meet energy needs.

The minister said the refin-

ery, built by South Korean firm Hyundai, can produce nine million litres of fuel a day -- equivalent to more than half Iraq's daily imports of 15 million litres.

The refinery also has the capacity to produce 200 megawatts of electricity and “60 megawatts of them will be allocated to the national grid”, Abdel Ghani added.

Iraq, the second largest producer within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), exports an average of 3.3 million barrels of oil per day.

Crude exports represent around 90 percent of the government's revenue.

Ravaged by decades of conflict, Iraq's crumbling infrastructure and endemic corruption have obstructed recon-

struction efforts.

The Karbala refinery is “the first to be built since the 1980s with such production capacity”, an oil ministry official told AFP when tests were run in September.

Three other refineries in operation across Iraq meet about half of the country's demand for refined products and the rest is imported.

In March, the prime minister announced a campaign to combat the severe impacts of climate change on the water-scarce country, including by promoting clean and renewable energy.

Sudani said Iraq was “moving forward to conclude contracts for constructing renewable energy power plants to provide one-third of our electricity demand by 2030”.

Long delays at UK port for travellers headed to France

London, United Kingdom

Passengers going by coach from the UK to France yesterday, the first day of the Easter holidays, experienced huge delays due to lengthy French border checks, Dover port authorities said.

Long waits for travellers at the port at the start of school holidays have become more frequent since Brexit, which ended free movement from Britain to EU member states.

Ferry firm DFDS said waiting time for coaches to board ferries on Friday evening was around seven hours.

Dover Port on Saturday coaches said were now waiting “several hours but tourist cars are getting through OK”.



Lorries queue on the A20 to get to the Port of Dover in Kent, England

“The Port of Dover is deeply frustrated by last night's and this morning's situation,” a statement said, adding that freight traffic had not been affected. Last summer, the UK

government blamed France for failing to adequately staff their border posts at Dover port after two days of long delays for all travellers, prompting a swift denial from Paris.

Inflation at 50-year high in crisis-hit Pakistan

Islamabad, Pakistan

Pakistan's year-on-year inflation hit 35.37% in March -- the highest in nearly five decades -- as the government scrambled to meet International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions to unlock a desperately needed bailout.

Month-on-month inflation was 3.72%, according to government data released Saturday, while the average inflation rate for the past year was

27.26%. Years of financial mismanagement and political instability have pushed Pakistan's economy to the brink of collapse, exacerbated by a global energy crisis and devastating floods that submerged a third of the country in 2022.

The country needs billions of dollars of financing to service existing debt, while foreign exchange reserves have dwindled and the rupee is in freefall.

Poor Pakistanis are feeling the brunt of the economic turmoil, and at least 20 people have been killed since the start of Ramadan in crowd crushes at food distribution centres. The South Asian nation -- home to more than 220 million -- is deep in debt and must enact tough tax reforms and push up utility prices if it hopes to unlock another tranche of a \$6.5 billion IMF bailout and avoid defaulting.

Musk defends paid Twitter as blue tick ultimatum looms

● **Twitter Blue, costs \$8 a month or \$84 a year, or \$11 a month if bought through Apple's app store**

Washington, United States

Elon Musk on Friday defended his controversial pay model for Twitter, claiming that any social media platform that didn't follow suit would fail because they would be swarmed by bots.

Musk made his prediction on the eve of Twitter's April 1 ultimatum that verified accounts with the cherished blue tick that had not forked over cash would lose it.

“The fundamental challenge here is that it's (easy) to cre-



Elon Musk speaks during a press conference at SpaceX's Starbase facility near Boca Chica Village in South Texas

ate literally 10,000 or 100,000 fake Twitter accounts using just one computer at home and with modern AI (artificial intel-

ligence),” Musk told a question and answer session on Twitter. “That's the reason for really pressing hard on verified where

the verified requires a number from a reputable phone carrier and a credit card,” Musk said.

“My prediction is that any so-called social media network that doesn't do this will fail,” Musk added.

The change in system puts pressure on companies, journalists and celebrities who used Twitter as their main channel of communication and relied on the blue tick for credibility.

And it also raises the specter of imposters and jokesters paying for an officially verified, but totally fake account.

In the US, the subscription plan, known as Twitter Blue, costs \$8 a month or \$84 a year, or \$11 a month if bought through Apple's app store.

Since its creation in 2009, the blue tick or checkmark became a signature element that helped the platform become a trust-

ed forum for news makers and campaigners.

But Musk and his fans said the blue check was decided by fiat in a secretive procedure and called it a symbol of an unfair class system.

Opening the blue tick to paying subscribers was among the first decisions made by Musk when he took ownership of Twitter last year, but his overhaul backfired.

Within hours, Twitter was flooded by fake yet verified accounts impersonating celebrities, major companies and even

Musk himself.

Musk swiftly backtracked, but many advertisers fled the site, denying Twitter a major source of income that the CEO is struggling to replace.

For now, blue checks of celebrities -- including Justin Bieber and his 113 million followers or footballer Cristiano Ronaldo and his 108 million -- are tagged on the site as “legacy” accounts.

Last week Musk put the current value of Twitter at \$20 billion, less than half the \$44 billion he paid for the social media platform just five months ago.



News media companies, firms and charities already lost their blue tick and were tagged as verified business accounts under Musk's new system. According to Twitter's website, these cost a hefty fee of \$1,000 a month in the United States, and \$50 for each additional affiliated account.