

# GFH AGM approves US\$42 million dividend

● **Approved a recommendation for the voluntary delisting of the Group's shares from the Kuwait bourse**

TDT | Manama

The shareholders of GFH Financial Group yesterday approved the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute a dividend of US\$42 million.

The payment includes cash profits for all ordinary shares, save for treasury shares, at 1.86% of the nominal value of the share (equal to US\$0.0049, BDO.001859, UAE dirham 0.0181), totalling US\$17 million. The distribution



GFH holds Annual (AGM) and Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), virtually

also includes bonus shares for all ordinary shares at 2.56% of the nominal value of the share (one share for every 39.03 shares owned), equivalent to US\$25 m.

Shareholders yesterday also approved a report on the Group's business activities for the 2020 financial year, the reappointment of external auditors for 2021 and a recommendation for the voluntary delisting of the Group's shares from the Kuwait bourse.

The EGM further saw shareholders approve the reduction of the Group's capital by the cancelling of treasury shares amounting up to a maximum of 141,335,000 shares worth up to US\$37.45 million. This is the result of the cancellation of the Group's market maker agree-

ment and subject to the approval of the competent regulatory authorities.

GFH Shareholders also approved an increase in the Group's capital from US\$975.64 m to US\$1.00 billion as a result of the addition of bonus shares amounting to 94,339,623 shares subject to the approval of the Central Bank of Bahrain.

Hisham Alrayes, CEO of GFH, said, "Our strong foundations, sound strategy and success in the diversification of our business and income streams, nevertheless, allowed us to effectively navigate the challenges of 2020. We are proud of GFH's ability to continue to demonstrate our resilience and to create and deliver value no matter how challenging the circumstances."

## Boosting Woman-owned managers

Xponance and Investcorp to launch strategic partnership



David Lee, Rishi Kapoor and Tina Byles Williams

TDT | Manama

Xponance, a \$12 billion multi-strategy investment firm, and Investcorp, a \$35 billion leading global provider and manager of alternative investment products, yesterday announced entering into a strategic partnership to collaborate on General Partnership (GP) staking and seeding interests in diverse and woman-owned alternative asset managers.

Xponance Alts Solutions (XAlts), a subsidiary of Xponance, Inc., and Investcorp's Strategic Capital Group (ISCG) will work together to increase access to strategic capital and other resources for select firms that are believed to have been historically overlooked.

Launched in 2019 by Anthony Maniscalco and David Lee, Investcorp's Strategic Capital Group seeks to be a long-term strategic partner to mid-sized alternative asset managers, with a primary focus on GPs it believes to be well-established, with successful track records and that are poised for growth. Xponance's alternatives platform, XAlts, was established earlier this year to provide direct capital solu-

tions to emerging and diverse alternative managers. It is led by industry veteran Marquette Chester, who joined the firm in February.

Tina Byles Williams, the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Xponance, said: "Our deep experience in seeding, sourcing, and nurturing trusted manager relationships, combined with ISCG's diversified sourcing, due diligence, structuring and value-enhancing disciplines, should make for a compelling and value-producing, long-term engagement." Byles Williams joined the advisory board of ISCG, effective January 1, 2021.

Rishi Kapoor, Co-Chief Executive Officer of Investcorp, commented: "This partnership will build on our existing commitment to identifying best-in-class private capital GPs, now with the opportunity for wider exposure to diverse and women-owned firms."

David Lee, Partner in ISCG, added: "Through this partnership with Xponance, we are delighted to be able to connect with a broader group of stakeholders to create what we believe to be sustainable value for the managers and our investors."

## Suez Canal may expand southern channel

Reuters | Ismailia, Egypt

The Suez Canal Authority is considering expanding the southern section of the waterway where the container ship Ever Given became stranded, its chairman said yesterday.

It is also looking into procuring cranes that could potentially offload cargo at heights of up to 52 meters, Osama Rabie told Reuters in an interview.

"Our procedures are sound, we are just aiming to improve the service," he said.

The 400-metre-long (1,310 ft) Ever Given became grounded diagonally across the southern section of the canal during high winds on March 23. It remained stuck for six days, preventing



Osama Rabie, Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority

hundreds of ships from passing and significantly impacting global trade flows.

After it was dislodged, the ship was taken to a lake that separates two sections of the canal where the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) has been conducting investigations. Rabie said data from the ship's recorders had been removed and handed over to an investigation committee, and that the ship would travel on once the procedures were completed.

"We are talking about two or three more days, God willing. But we won't take much time," he said. The SCA has said that it will continue to take ships of the Ever Given's size and is reinforcing its ability to deal with future problems.

"We will try to get two more tug boats, with pulling power of more than 200 tonnes - 250, 280, depending," Rabie said.



In 1854, Ferdinand de Lesseps, the former French consul to Cairo, secured an agreement with the Ottoman governor of Egypt to build a canal 100 miles across the Isthmus of Suez.

## IMF favours global minimum corporate tax - chief economist

Reuters | Washington

The International Monetary Fund has long favoured adoption of a global minimum tax on corporate profits, the Fund's chief economist, Gita Gopinath, told reporters on Tuesday, calling tax avoidance a troubling issue for the global economy.

Gopinath said current disparities in national corporate tax rates had triggered "a large amount" of tax shifting and tax avoidance, reducing the tax base on which governments could collect revenues to fund needed economic and social spending.

"It is a big concern," Gopinath told reporters during an online briefing. "We are very much in favor of a global mini-



Gita Gopinath

mum corporate tax."

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said on Tuesday a global deal on cross-border taxation was within reach as he welcomed a pledge by U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen to work on a global corporate minimum rate.

Gopinath said the IMF had not taken a position on the ideal level for such a tax rate, adding that governments would need

to replenish their coffers after massive spending to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its economic impact.

"The hope is that they will move forward better to have more inclusive, sustainable, green economies, and that would require measures both on the revenue side and on the expenditure side," she said, adding that each country would have to carefully tailor its own actions on the tax front.

Gopinath said the IMF was still studying the Biden administration's proposal to raise the corporate tax rate to 28%, but noted that the former Trump administration's decision to lower that tax rate from 35% to 21% in 2017 had had less impact on investment than initially expected.

## India court says ByteDance must deposit \$11 million in tax evasion case

Reuters | Mumbai

An Indian court yesterday said China's ByteDance must deposit around \$11 million that authorities believe the company owes in an alleged case of tax evasion, a decision the government said bars the firm from using existing bank funds for other purposes.

An Indian tax intelligence agency in mid-March ordered HSBC and Citibank in Mumbai to freeze accounts of ByteDance India as it investigated some of the firm's financial dealings. ByteDance challenged the move in court saying the freeze amounted to harassment and was done illegally.

## Etihad starts direct passenger flights to Israel

Reuters | Dubai

Abu Dhabi state carrier Etihad Airways began direct commercial passenger flights from the United Arab Emirates capital to Tel Aviv in Israel - the latest direct air link between the two countries that established

diplomatic relations last year.

UAE Ambassador to Israel Mohamed Al Khaja and Israel's head of mission to the UAE Eitan Na'eh were on the inaugural flight.

"As our countries recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we have much to look forward to

in commercial, diplomatic, technological, health, and tourism exchanges," Khaja was quoted as saying by UAE state news agency WAM.

WAM said on Tuesday it had launched a news service in Hebrew, becoming the first Arab news agency to do so, with its

reports focusing in part on bilateral relations between the UAE and Israel.

Etihad said it would initially offer two weekly flights between Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi, which has placed Israel on its green list of countries, meaning visitors do not need to quarantine due to

the coronavirus.

Other UAE and Israeli airlines have launched direct flights.

The Gulf Arab state has become a popular destination for Israeli tourists even as the coronavirus pandemic continues to disrupt travel globally.

The UAE and Israel are among the countries with the world's fastest COVID-19 vaccination programmes.

The UAE and fellow Gulf state Bahrain normalised ties with Israel last September as part of a US-brokered agreement.