

## Saudi signs MoUs with IBM, Alibaba and Huawei on AI

Reuters

The Saudi Authority for Data and Artificial Intelligence yesterday signed three memorandums of understanding with IBM, Alibaba and Huawei at a summit in the kingdom, state news agency SPA said.

SPA did not disclose details on the agreements.

## Facebook launches dating service in Europe



Reuters

Facebook Inc said on Wednesday it was launching its dating service in 32 European countries after the rollout was delayed earlier this year due to regulatory concerns.

The social media company in February postponed launching Facebook Dating in Europe after concerns were raised by Ireland's Data Protection Commissioner (DPC), the main regulator in the European Union for a number of the world's biggest technology firms including Facebook.

The DPC was very concerned about being given a short notice of the launch planned for Feb. 13. It was intimated about it on Feb. 3.

It had also said it was not given documentation regarding data protection impact assessment or decision-making processes that had been undertaken by Facebook.

Facebook Dating, a dedicated, opt-in space within the Facebook app, was launched in the United States in September last year. It is currently available in 20 other countries.

## Adidas plans to sell ailing Reebok



Reuters | Frankfurt/Munich

German sportswear company Adidas is planning to sell its Reebok division, Germany's manager magazine reported on Thursday, as the group seeks to put an end to its ill-fated investment in the US-focused brand.

Adidas Chief Executive Kasper Rorsted plans to complete the sale by March 2021, the magazine said, without citing where it obtained the information.

# BMP to lift BAPCO capacity by 42 pc

Minister of Oil visits Bapco Modernisation project site



The Minister of Oil, Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, toured the greenfield project site and witnessed the lift of the heaviest piece of equipment

TDT | Manama

Bapco said it is progressing with its Bapco Modernisation Programme (BMP), to build the optimum refinery configuration that would place it firmly among the most competitive refineries in the region and the world.

BMP is a multi-billion-dollar investment, which is Bapco's largest capital investment in its 90-year history. The project will effectively increase the refinery's crude capacity by 42 per cent (from 267,000 to 380,000 barrels per day).

The Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) contract for the project is with a joint venture consortium of Technip FMC (Italy), Tecnicas Reunidas (Spain), Samsung Engineering (South Korea) reg-

istered in Bahrain under the name TTSJV.

As part of the project's construction activities, several super heavy and oversized pieces of equipment have arrived in Bahrain and are being installed at the project site.

Yesterday, the Minister of Oil, Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, toured the greenfield project site and witnessed the lift of the heaviest piece of equipment, the new hydrocracker first stage reactor, weighing 1300T.

Bapco Chairman and Chief Executive, Dr Dawood Nassif, Deputy Chief Executive Ebrahim Talib, and BMP Project Director Hafedh AlQassab accompanied the minister.

The successful completion of this super heavy lift is a major project milestone. The minister congratulated all project team



Members from Bapco, Worley, TTSJV and related subcontractors.

## WhatsApp to offer in-app purchases, cloud hosting services

● WhatsApp will enable businesses sell products inside WhatsApp via Facebook Shops

● To allow customer service messaging tools the ability to store those messages on Facebook servers



WhatsApp's chief operating officer, Matt Idema

Reuters | San Francisco

Facebook Inc yesterday said its WhatsApp messaging app would start to offer in-app purchases and hosting services, as it moves to boost revenue from the app while knitting together e-commerce infrastructure across the company.

The world's biggest social media company has been trying to boost sales from higher-growth units such as Instagram and WhatsApp, which it bought in 2014 for \$19 billion but has been slow to monetize.

With the changes, WhatsApp will enable businesses sell products inside WhatsApp via Facebook Shops, an online store launched in May to offer a unified shopping experience across Facebook's apps.

The company will also enter the cloud computing sector, offering firms who use its customer service messaging tools the ability to store those messages on Facebook servers.

WhatsApp's chief operating officer, Matt Idema, said in an interview that the shopping tool would start rolling out this year, while message hosting would become available in 2021.

Idema said WhatsApp would

offer the hosting service for free to try to draw new paying customers to its enterprise tools, which charge 0.5 cents to 9 cents per message delivered.

The app has a relatively small customer base of tens of thousands of businesses, while tens of millions use its more limited free tools aimed at small businesses.

In total, more than 175 million people interact with a business each day on WhatsApp, Idema said.

"The revenue is small today, by comparison to Facebook at large, but we think the opportunity is pretty big," he said.

Idema said chats with a business using the new hosting service will disclose that those conversations are stored elsewhere and not protected by the app's end-to-end encryption.

# 175m

In total, more than 175 million people interact with a business each day on WhatsApp

## Malabar Gold virtually opens new store in India

● Brand ambassador Tamannaah Bhatia along with Malabar Group Chairman M P Ahammed opened the store

● Malabar Gold & Diamonds takes the store tally in Telangana to 13

TDT | Manama

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the largest jewellery retailers in the world, inaugurated its 13th store at Khammam in Telangana, India with a one-of-its-kind virtual store launch event.

Brand ambassador actress Tamannaah Bhatia virtually opened the store along with Malabar Group Chairman M P Ahammed and O Asher, Managing Director-India Operations. Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds and Abdul Salam KP - Group Executive Director, Malabar Group and other senior management officials were also present at the virtual store inauguration event.



Brand ambassador actress Tamannaah Bhatia virtually opened the store along with Malabar Group Chairman M P Ahammed and O Asher, Managing Director-India Operations. Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds and Abdul Salam KP - Group Executive Director, Malabar Group and other senior management officials were also present at the virtual store inauguration event.

Streamed on the jeweller's official Facebook page, the event was watched from across the world. Although the jeweller went for the virtual inauguration to comply with the safety meas-

ures in this time of the pandemic, the event was no less than an actual store launch event. The store launch was preceded by a special preview sale which attracted encouraging response

from the jewellery buyers.

Located at Wyr Road, Khammam, the exquisitely designed showroom is a part of the global expansion plan of the jeweller. The store will offer a safe and

hygienic retail environment to its customers by adopting all the necessary precautions and safety measures.

"Our Khammam store will offer world-class shopping experience in terms of unmatched design variety with quality assurance, excellent instore shopping ambience and unparalleled after-sales customer service. The store will help us spread our retail presence in Telangana. Our retail expansion is a part of our plan to become the number one gold retail brand in the world in terms of both showroom count and sales. So, we have plans to triple the number of showrooms in the next five years," said Malabar Group Chairman MP Ahammed.

While inaugurating the store, brand ambassador Bollywood actor Tamannaah Bhatia said, "Malabar Gold & Diamonds is now synonymous with excellence in product innovation and service and quality assurance. The virtual inauguration proves that the jeweller is committed to expand its customer-base with its distinctive product, service and quality offerings in these challenging times. The Khammam store will set the standard for an extraordinary jewellery shopping experience in its region."