

UAE central bank starts curb of COVID-19 stimulus measures

● 15% of UAE banks' loan portfolios had benefited from a loan deferral programme

● Reserve requirements for banks will remain unchanged

Reuters | Dubai

The United Arab Emirates central bank (CBAUAE) said yesterday it was starting to gradually withdraw stimulus measures introduced last year to mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bank launched a Targeted Economic Support Scheme (TESS) to help banks provide temporary relief to companies and individuals affected by the crisis and boost lending capacity through the relief of existing



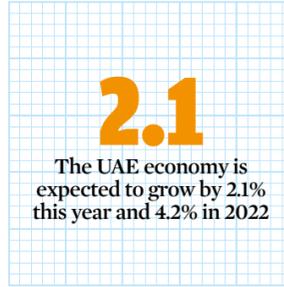
A general view of the Burj Khalifa and the downtown skyline in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

capital and liquidity buffers.

"In view of the gradual increase in economic activity, the CBAUAE is starting a gradual and well-calibrated withdrawal of its Targeted Economic Support Scheme to avoid restricting credit supply and economic growth," it said in a statement.

It said 15% of UAE banks' loan portfolios had benefited from a loan deferral programme that is part of the scheme.

The bank will leave unchanged temporarily lowered reserve requirements for banks and the level of the loan-to-value ratio applicable to mortgage loans for first-time home buy-



ers.

It said it was considering extending beyond the end of this year regulatory relief measures that allow banks to maintain lower capital and liquidity buffers, depending on the pace of economic recovery and loan demand.

The UAE economy is expected to grow by 2.1% this year and 4.2% in 2022, the central bank said earlier this week, supported by a recovery in global travel, a pick-up in domestic and external demand, and a successful vaccination drive.

New semiconductor plants will end global auto chip shortage next year -Tesla's Musk



Chairman of Stellantis and Ferrari John Elkann speaks via video conference with Tesla's founder Elon Musk during the "Italian Tech Week" event in Turin, Italy

Reuters | Turin

Tesla Inc CEO Elon Musk said yesterday that thanks to new semiconductor plants that are planned or under construction, the global chip shortage that has pummeled the car industry this year should be short term in nature.

Asked how long he thought the global chip shortage would affect vehicle production, Musk said: "short term I think".

"There's a lot of chip fabrication plants that are being built," Musk said during a joint session with Stellantis and Ferrari Chairman John Elkann, at Italian Tech Week.

"I think we will have good capacity for providing chips by next year," he added.

The two automotive industry leaders agreed on potential support coming from nuclear power to cover for increasing global energy needs.

"I am surprised by a recent move away of some countries from nuclear energy, which is

safe," Musk said.

But in their dialogue they avoided referring to competition issues between top electric mobility leaders such as Tesla and legacy automakers now investing heavily to expand their offer of electrified vehicles.

Musk however thanked Elkann for a support Tesla received between 2017 and 2019 from Comau, the robot unit of Fiat Chrysler, now part of Stellantis, during what he called "one of the most painful periods" for his company, linked to the launch of production on Model 3.

"John helped me a lot in that period," Musk said, adding Tesla had come close to bankruptcy "half a dozen times".

Stellantis Chief Executive Carlos Tavares has said the group, formed through the merger between Fiat Chrysler and France's PSA, expected to achieve its European carbon dioxide emission targets this year without credits bought from Tesla.

China's top regulators ban crypto trading and mining, bitcoin stumbles

● China intensifies crypto crackdown

● Vows to root out "illegal" trading activity, bans mining

● Bitcoin, smaller coins slump

Reuters | Shanghai

China's most powerful regulators yesterday intensified the country's crackdown on cryptocurrency with a blanket ban on all crypto transactions and crypto mining, hitting bitcoin and other major coins and pressuring crypto and blockchain-related stocks.

Ten agencies, including the central bank as well as banking,



A Chinese flag is seen among representations of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies

securities and foreign exchange regulators, vowed to work together to root out "illegal" cryptocurrency activity, the first time the Beijing-based agencies have joined forces to explicitly ban all cryptocurrency-related activity.

"China has been known to go to extremes with either very assertive statements and prosecutions to complete radio silence," said George Zarya, CEO of Bequant crypto exchange in

London.

"This time the point was made very clear that China will not support cryptocurrency market development as it goes against its policies of tightening up control over capital flow and big tech," he said.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said cryptocurrencies must not circulate as traditional currencies and that overseas exchanges are barred from providing services to mainland invest-

tors via the internet, cutting the likes of Coinbase and Binance off from the world's second-largest zecconomy.

The PBOC also barred financial institutions, payment companies and internet firms from facilitating cryptocurrency trading nationally.

The Chinese government will "resolutely clamp down on virtual currency speculation, and related financial activities and misbehaviour in order to safeguard people's properties and maintain economic, financial and social order", the PBOC said in a statement.

Bitcoin, the world's largest cryptocurrency, dropped over 6% to \$42,216.7 on the news, having earlier been down about 1%. Smaller coins, which typically rise and fall in tandem with bitcoin, also tumbled. Ether fell 10% while XRP dropped a similar amount.

Twitter rolls out bitcoin tipping, safety features in product push

● Twitter to warn people when they enter a "heated" conversation

● To support authentication for NFTs, or non-fungible tokens, which are digital assets

Reuters

Twitter Inc will allow people to tip their favourite content creators with bitcoin and will launch a fund to pay some users who host audio chat rooms on its Spaces feature, the company said on Thursday.

The San Francisco-based



Twitter users globally on iOS devices can now send and receive digital payments

company added it will test new ways to help users have a safer experience on Twitter, such as

warning when people are entering a "heated" conversation or letting them leave tweet threads.

The product announcements are part of Twitter's effort to compete with rival platforms

like Facebook and Alphabet Inc's YouTube for popular content creators with large followings, and turn around its image as a site where polarised discussions can fester.

Twitter users globally on iOS devices can now send and receive digital payments, which was previously limited to a small group of testers.

"We believe we can continue to incentivise the types of conversations that people want to see," said Esther Crawford, product lead for creator monetisation at Twitter, in a briefing with reporters.

Twitter said it plans to support authentication for NFTs, or non-fungible tokens, which are digital assets such as images or videos that exist on a blockchain.

The feature will let people track and showcase their NFT ownership on Twitter, the company said. In an effort to grow Spaces, Twitter will launch a creator fund to provide financial, technical and marketing support to users who host recurring audio programming on Spaces.

Such support will allow more Spaces hosts to organise better conversations and potentially gain brand sponsorship deals, said Andre Jean-Pierre, who served as an early beta-tester for Spaces.

Twitter added it is exploring how to allow users to filter out certain words they do not want to see in the replies to their tweets, which could be used to stop name-calling or abusive speech.