

business

Ithmaar Bank revises branch, office timings

- All Ithmaar branches are operating from 8 to 1 pm
- Head office opens from 8:30 to 2:30 pm only
- All 42 ATMs continue to operate

TDT | Manama

Ithmaar Bank, a Bahrain-based Islamic retail bank, yesterday said it revised branch and office timings and has taken additional precautionary measures to help contain the Coronavirus (COVID-19) virus.

Starting 24 March 2020, all Ithmaar branches are operating from 8 to 1 pm and its head office from 8:30 to 2:30 pm only.

Besides, the bank closed its Galali and Salmabad branches on Saturday, which will continue like that until further notice.

Earlier last week, Ithmaar Bank closed Budaiya and Manama Souq branches.

All 42 ATMs continue to operate.

As part of its public awareness campaign, the Bank is urging customers to bank online as almost all Ithmaar Bank transactions can be completed

“These are challenging times for all of us. However, if we all do our part, we can collectively overcome even the greatest of challenges

AHMED ABDUL RAHIM
ITHMAAR BANK CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



online.

The bank, already following MOH recommended sanitation protocols, also started limiting the number of customers present in a branch at any given time and providing appropriate waiting arrangements to ensure customers are seated at least a meter from one another.

“These are challenging times for all of us,” said Ithmaar Bank Chief Executive Officer, Ahmed Abdul Rahim. “However, if we all do our part, we can collectively overcome even the greatest of challenges,” he said.

“This is a responsibility we have always taken very seriously, and we remain as committed as ever to playing a real and meaningful role in the community,” added Abdul Rahim assuring that it is closely fol-

lowing all relevant directives, from both the MOH and the CBB.

Ithmaar Bank also initiated its own public awareness campaign, including sending out SMS messages to customers and reposting MOH public awareness messages on the bank’s social media platforms.

In 2019, Ithmaar Bank launched a customer-centric chat service on the WhatsApp Business social media platform to help further improve its customers’ banking experience.

Customers can message Ithmaar Bank Call Centre on 13303030 to request information through WhatsApp about products and services, as well as make general inquiries like Thimaar draw dates and winners list, as well as ongoing promotions and campaigns.

Saudi Arabia assures India of uninterrupted LPG supply: Dharmendra Pradhan



Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih addresses the media flanked by India’s Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan (L) and Saudi Aramco Chief Executive Officer Amin Nasser (R) during International Energy Forum (IEF)

Reuters | Dubai

India’s oil minister said yesterday that he had discussed global oil market developments with Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman and Aramco’s Chief Executive Amin Nasser as well as uninterrupted LPG supplies to India.

“Prince Abdulaziz assured (me) of LPG supplies in the coming days to support our domestic requirement,” Dharmendra Pradhan posted on his Twitter account.

On Friday, two Indian refiners declared force majeure on crude purchases from the Middle East after fuel demand plummeted due to a nationwide lockdown to stem the spread of coronavirus and the companies’ tanks are full, sources said.

RAMEZ Group ensures clients and employees’ safety against Coronavirus

TDT | Manama

RAMEZ Group, a retail network in the GCC and Asia, said it is implementing precautionary measures in all its branches to ensure the safety of shoppers and employees to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19) spread.

To ensure safety and cleanliness, RAMEZ Group said it has formed special committees to monitor the daily safety and cleanliness measures, in addition to replacing the employees’ work fingerprint with an eye scanner system.

Besides, RAMEZ Group said it has distributed more than 40,000 free respirators and is disinfecting all shopping carts and surfaces all times, and wrapping shopping carts grips with plastic as a new procedure.

The group said it has also installed dedicated shopping hour for the elderly and vulnerable, from 8:00 am till 9:00 am, giving them the priority to do their shopping easily and safely.

Other measures taken include dispersing awareness posters in offices and branches, imposing a 1-metre-distance procedure between customers in a queue close from cashier desks.

Commenting, RAMEZ Group Chairman Ramez Al Awadi said, “Our main target now is to help the national efforts to mitigate coronavirus spread and flattening the curve, we have taken all the appropri-



“Our main target now is to help the national efforts to mitigate coronavirus spread and flattening the curve, we have taken all the appropriate precautionary measures to ensure the safety of our dear customers and employees, and we assure all consumers that food of all kinds and other daily needs are available in all our branches

RAMEZ AL AWADI
RAMEZ GROUP CHAIRMAN

ate precautionary measures to ensure the safety of our dear customers and employees, and we assure all consumers that food of all kinds and other daily needs are available in all our branches, and we are always keen to provide the best safe and clean shopping experience for all.”

Most major Gulf stocks gain on coronavirus measures

- Saudi flight and workplace suspensions extended indefinitely
- Qatar records first coronavirus death
- Qatar stock market retreats
- Egypt limits daily withdrawals, deposits

Reuters

Most major Gulf bourses rose yesterday as the states took more stringent measures to contain the coronavirus, though Qatar’s index fell after the nation’s first death from the virus.

In Abu Dhabi, the index advanced 2.9 per cent, led by a 6.2pc gain for First Abu Dhabi Bank and a 3.2pc gain by telecoms company Etisalat.

The Dubai index added 1.3pc, with blue-chip developer Emaar Properties jumping by 5.7pc and



Traders watching stock movements (Courtesy of Gulf Business)

Dubai Investments up 3.7pc.

The United Arab Emirates’ attorney-General, Hamad Saif Al Shamsi, issued a statement detailing coronavirus-related fines, including 50,000 dirhams (\$13,613) for non-compliance with home quarantine orders and 3,000 dirhams for individuals violating curfew.

The UAE, the region’s tourism and business hub, has also halted passenger flights at its main airports, except for evacuation trips.

Last week the UAE cabinet approved an additional 16 billion dirhams (\$4.36 billion) for

a total stimulus package of 126 billion dirhams to counter the coronavirus outbreak.

Saudi Arabia’s benchmark index closed 0.8pc up, extending gains from the previous session. Al Rajhi Bank rose 1.9pc while Jabal Omar Development advanced by 4.8pc.

On Sunday the kingdom said it was extending indefinitely the suspension of international passenger flights and workplace attendance in both the public and private sectors as part of its efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

In Qatar, however, the index

lost 0.6pc. Most stocks closed lower, including a 1.4pc decline for Industries Qatar.

The Gulf state on Saturday recorded its first death from the coronavirus and 28 more cases to take its total to 590 infections, the health ministry said.

Outside the Gulf, Egypt’s blue-chip index dropped 1.5pc. Commercial International Bank and Egypt Kuwait Holding both retreated by 2.2pc.

Egyptian banks have been instructed to apply temporary limits on daily withdrawals and deposits in a move seemingly designed to control inflation and hoarding as concern grows over the spread of the coronavirus.

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.8pc to 6,377 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 2.9pc to 3,879 pts
DUBAI	▲ 1.3pc to 1,832 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.6pc to 8,431 pts
EGYPT	▼ 1.5pc to 9,760 pts
BAHRAIN	▼ 1.9pc to 1,362 pts
OMAN	▼ 1.7pc to 3,480 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 3.4pc to 5,102 pts

UAE opens drive-through coronavirus testing site



An Emirati man wearing a protective face-mask walks past graffiti in Dubai

Dubai

The United Arab Emirates said it has launched a drive-through coronavirus testing facility as part of the Gulf state’s efforts to fight the disease.

The facility, inaugurated by Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, will provide screenings within five minutes, using state-of-the-art equipment and a medical team, the Abu Dhabi government’s media office said.

“A new drive-through testing facility for COVID-19 has launched ... to offer safe testing procedures,” the office said Saturday on Twitter.

According to official state news agency WAM, the facility can serve 600 people a day, with priority given to senior citizens, pregnant women and those with chronic illnesses.

The media office said people should book an appointment in advance.

Tests “for the wider community for reassurance only” would cost 370 dirhams (\$100), according to government advice on Twitter.

The UAE, which on Sunday had 570 officially declared COVID-19 cases, including three deaths, has imposed restrictions on night movements and taken steps to sanitise outdoor areas and public transport.