

The Business

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■ **Almoayed Motors and Ford opened its new Quick Parts Centre in Arad under the patronage of Y K Almoayed and Sons chairman Farouk Almoayed yesterday. The new outlet gave access to customers of Ford and other car brands the availability of almost 20,000 parts in and around the kingdom. Ford Middle East, regional customer service director Chris Noel inaugurated the centre.**

Bahrain picks banks over key bond issue

DUBAI: Bahrain has picked four banks to arrange investor meetings ahead of a potential sovereign bond issue, a document from lead managers said yesterday, with proceeds likely to be used to plug an expected budget deficit for 2013.

The International Monetary Fund said

in May that it was forecasting a fiscal shortfall of 4.2 per cent this year.

In recent years, the kingdom has typically issued one international debt offering a year. It was last in the market in July last year, with a \$1.5 billion 10-year bond which yielded 6.143pc.

Roadshows ahead of the potential new deal, a benchmark-sized, dollar-denom-

inated issue, will commence tomorrow, the statement said.

One team will hold three days of meetings in the US before roadshows in London on June 17 and 18.

A second team will visit Riyadh and Abu Dhabi tomorrow and Thursday respectively.

Bahrain has chosen BNP Paribas, Citi,

JP Morgan and GIB Capital, the investment banking arm of Gulf International Bank, to arrange the meetings.

Benchmark-sized bonds are traditionally understood to be worth at least \$500 million.

Sources said on April 29 that the four banks had been picked to arrange a sovereign offering.

Indian rupee plunges to record low

MUMBAI: India's rupee slid to a record low against the dollar yesterday as dealers moved into the US currency following robust US jobs data and growing concern about the South Asian nation's struggling economy.

The partially convertible Indian currency ended the day at a new low of 58.15 to the dollar yesterday afternoon, sweeping past its previous low of 57.32 rupees.

The rupee's fall is the latest blow to the stuttering growth story of Asia's third largest economy, which has been beset by slower growth, worsening public finances and political turmoil.

Foreign exchange traders reported no signs the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was intervening in the currency market to support the beleaguered rupee.

"Large-scale intervention from the RBI to buck the trend is unlikely. They cannot stop the tide immediately," said Siddhartha Sanyal, chief India economist with Barclays Capital.

Analysts say the central bank cannot intervene to buttress the currency as it must retain enough foreign reserves for imports. Right now, it only has sufficient reserves for seven months of imports.

New Delhi attempted to ease corporate concerns, saying it will take measures to curb the widening current account deficit as imports outpace exports.

India's chief economic adviser at the finance ministry, Raghuram Rajan, said "medium-term" steps will be taken to ease rupee volatility.

Firm opens training centre

MANAMA: Qlite Limited UK, a low voltage control manufacturer, has opened its new training centre for Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region in Bahrain.

The company, a designer and manufacturer of dimming controls, lighting controls, guest room management systems, home automation systems and sensors, organised a special three-day orientation for select invitees to mark the launch of the new facility.

The centre enables the first hand practical training of all elements of the Qlite range from system selection to installation, programming and user operation, it said.

"The facility, as it is centrally located in the region, will support our ever increasing number of contractors and integrators," said Qlite Europe managing director Craig Bligh, who was in Bahrain for the launch.

"It also provides us a suitable environment to display our state-of-the-art solutions in a



■ **At the launch event are, from left, Qlite Bahrain general manager Divij Kotwal, Middle East and Asia Pacific managing director Anil Sharma and Mr Bligh**

practical and interactive manner.

"The Bahrain market is crucial for Qlite and we will not hesitate to invest to support our position and reputation," Mr Bligh said.

"We are delighted with the growth and professionalism of

our Middle East team.

"Qlite has a wealth of experience working with architects, lighting designers, consultants and contractors," he said.

"Our technical capability means we can provide high quality, cost-effective, custom-made systems which meet all

design requirements and which create environments that are visually exciting, comfortable, practical and efficient," he added.

The company's new training centre and office complex is located in Business Bay Tower, Juffair.

Bank planning to expand business

DUBAI: Standard Chartered plans to expand its transaction banking business to capture global trade flows that are increasingly shifting East, a senior executive said.

The bank, which makes about four-fifths of its operating profit in Asia and the Middle East, aims to develop operations in countries such as Iraq, Mozambique and Myanmar as part

of expansion plans for 2013, Karen Fawcett, its global head of transaction banking business, said.

Large global banks are turning their focus to transaction banking business to counter increased competition and volatile revenues in other businesses such as investment banking.

JP Morgan Chase plans to beef up its transaction banking services in Africa.

Standard Chartered's transaction business currently accounts for about 35-40 per cent of its wholesale banking client revenues and generated income of \$3.67 billion in 2012, a gain of 13pc.

Fawcett expects trade flows between emerging market countries in Asia, Middle East and Africa to increase, boosting demand for services such as cash management and trade finance.

The bank expects emerging markets to account for 40pc of global trade by 2030 from around 18pc currently.

Trade between the Middle East and Asia has grown 700pc between 2000 and 2010, Fawcett said.

Annual trade between China and the UAE has expanded 16-fold since 2002 to \$40.4bn, according to Chinese official data.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

● Aviation is praised

MANAMA: Industry and Commerce Minister Dr Hassan Fakhro yesterday received Global Aviation Services chief executive John Smith, directors Maurice Holmes and Dr A Latif Alkhaja. The minister praised the aviation sector, a key element in attracting tourism.

● Saudi move

NEW DELHI: Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia is selling more crude to India in July as two refiners have asked for additional cargoes, industry and company sources familiar with the plan said, in part to make up for a loss of supplies from Iran. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited stopped buying Iranian crude from April because local insurers said they cannot cover refineries that process oil from Iran as global reinsurers, mostly based in the West, may not honour claims.

● LNG offered

CAIRO: Qatar will grant Egypt five shipments of natural gas to help Egyptians get through the summer until mid-September, a statement from the Egyptian Petroleum Ministry said yesterday. "Qatar will supply five cargoes of liquefied natural gas as a gift to the Egyptian people during the summer months, with the first of these shipments beginning at the end of July (and continuing) until mid-September," Qatar's Energy and Industry Minister Mohammed Al Sada said.

● Inflation up

CAIRO: Egypt's annual core inflation rate rose to 8.04 per cent in the year to May from 7.47pc in the year to April, the central bank said yesterday. Earlier, Egypt's statistics agency CAPMAS said May urban consumer inflation edged up to an annual 8.2pc from an annual 8.1pc in April.

● \$2.6bn loan

DUBAI: Investment Corporation of Dubai, the holding company for some of the emirate's best-known companies, has signed an upsized \$2.55 billion, five-year loan facility, it said yesterday. The new deal, which was arranged by a group of eight local and international banks, refinances an existing \$2 billion facility which is due to mature in August.