

# Kuwait Times BUSINESS

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## INDIA AFRICA FORUM SUMMIT 2015 SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING 26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, NEW DELHI



NEW DELHI: Indian Co-Chair of the Senior Official meeting Navtej Sarna (Front-6L) poses for a group photograph with other summit officials during the Third India-Africa Forum Summit at the Indira Gandhi stadium in New Delhi yesterday. India host an unprecedented gathering of Africa's leaders in India-Africa Forum Summit from October 26 to October 29, as it ramps up the race for resources on the continent, where its rival China already has a major head start. — AFP

## GULF BANK POSTS HEALTHY NET PROFIT OF KD 29.6M

INTRODUCTION OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES HELPING GROWTH

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank yesterday announced a 12% increase in net profit to KD 29.6 million for the first nine months of 2015. The growth in net profits for the first nine months was mainly from higher interest income, fee income, and other income. As of the end of September 2015, the Bank's total assets stood at KD 5,409 million, a 4% increase over the previous year, and the total shareholders' equity was KD 529

million, also a 4% increase over the previous year. Chairman and the Board, is focused on improving its services and introducing products that better serve our customer's needs. Our excellent team of relationship managers in wholesale banking has been complemented by a team of product specialists. In retail banking, we just announced the launch of our exciting new Gulf Rewards program. More innovations will follow."

Bank credit cardholders were automatically enrolled and the card is free for the first year. A special technology platform to facilitate easy online booking redemptions was created for Gulf Rewards. In terms of wholesale banking, our corporate banking group was reorganized to reflect key market segments and to deliver a broader suite of products and services with faster, more efficient customer service for local needs. Technology innovations such as new cash management products, a new collections system, and a series of process automation initiatives to improve controls in our branches have also been implemented.

## SAUDI BOUNCES AS SOME BLUE CHIPS PARE LOSSES

**DUBAI:** Saudi Arabia's top stock index rebounded yesterday as some blue chips were bought back after several days of punishing falls on concerns that low oil prices would force the government into spending and subsidy reductions as well as tax rises.

The index fell 6.7 percent over the four previous trading but towards the end of the session, petrochemical producer Saudi Basic Industries rose 1.8 percent, mining group Ma'aden 3.8 percent and oil shipper Bahri 3.3 percent.

This helped the index close 0.6 percent higher. Turnover remained modest, however, and some stocks continued sliding on expectations of a tighter state budget. City Cement fell 0.3 percent to a 31-month low, extending a decline that has taken it down about 10 percent in the last two weeks.

United Arab Emirates (UAE) markets dropped after the cabinet approved a slightly smaller federal budget for 2016, in a sign that the country is crimping expenditure due to low oil prices.

The UAE federal budget traditionally accounts for only about 14 percent of total fiscal spending in the country; the seven individual emirates, mainly oil-producing Abu Dhabi, provide the rest. With its diversified economy and huge fiscal reserves, the UAE is better able to cope with cheap oil than most countries.

But the cabinet's decision was seen as an indicator for consolidated national spending, and Dubai's index fell 1.3 percent. Construction firm Drake & Scull, vulnerable to any cutbacks in government projects, fell 3.3 percent while builder Arabtec lost 2.3 percent.

Abu Dhabi also slipped 1.3 percent with Aldar Properties, which is involved in government-linked projects, down 4.7 percent. But Union National Bank, which had fallen 3.8 percent on Sunday after its third-quarter profit missed analysts' expectations, rebounded 3.3 percent.

### Stocks fall

Qatar's index, often seen as the most defensive in the Gulf because of its high

dividend yields, rose 0.7 percent, and property developer Ezzan Holding climbed 1.8 percent before the announcement of its third-quarter earnings.

Bucking the trend, drilling rig provider Gulf International Services, the most heavily traded stock, dropped 2 percent after reporting a 32-percent fall in third-quarter net profit that was roughly in line with analysts' expectations.

Egypt's index fell 1 percent as property developers Amer and Porto once again accounted for the vast bulk of turnover, after Amer spun off Porto last week. Amer slipped 3.6 percent and Porto soared 11.9 percent.

Beltone Financial edged up 0.3 percent to 3.84 pounds after Orascom Telecom Media and Technology and investment bank ACT Financial proposed a 4-pound-per-share offer to acquire Beltone.

### MONDAY'S HIGHLIGHTS SAUDI ARABIA

The index rose 0.6 percent to 7,319 points.

### DUBAI

The index fell 1.3 percent to 3,553 points.

### ABU DHABI

The index dropped 1.3 percent to 4,414 points.

### QATAR

The index rose 0.7 percent to 11,722 points.

### EGYPT

The index fell 1.0 percent to 7,578 points.

### KUWAIT

The index edged down 0.1 percent to 5,804 points.

### OMAN

The index edged up 0.2 percent to 5,933 points. — Reuters



Omar Alghanim, Chairman of Gulf Bank



Cesar Gonzalez-Bueno Gulf Bank CEO

### Superior Service Culture and Products are Keys to Growth

Gulf Bank customers are attracted and retained by the dedication to serve them by its staff. With regards to consumer banking, the Bank has had strong growth. Overall consumer loans increased 15% year-over-year. Earlier this year, the Bank undertook a revamp of two of its customer segments, the Kuwaiti Salary proposition and the Red proposition, which caters to the youth/student segment. New accounts coming from those segments have grown at double digit rates.

The Bank's credit cards business has also continued its strong performance with double digit loan growth. Gulf Bank launched 'point of sale' (POS) terminals with the latest technology that accepts 'near field communication' (NFC). This allows compatible debit and credit cards to be waved or tapped at POS terminals for payment. Gulf Rewards, the fastest and most rewarding loyalty program, was also launched. It allows points to be redeemed for free flights, with no blackout dates, and free hotel stays in over 300,000 global hotels. All existing Gulf

### Importance of Human Capital and Focus on Social Responsibility

The Bank was pleased to mark a significant milestone in the third quarter for its Graduate Development Program, which works to build a large cadre of Kuwaiti bankers, by celebrating its first class of graduates. Further investing in Kuwaiti youth, the Bank continued its partnership with INJAZ to deliver educational and leadership development programs. A key heritage event sponsored by the Bank in this quarter was the 'Memorial Journey for Pearl Diving'. This event reminds new Kuwaiti generations of the difficulties and challenges of life, and traditions of previous generations.

In the third quarter the Bank undertook sponsorship of a unique walking and running sporting event in Kuwait, scheduled to take place on 14 November. The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon categories include: 5km walk; 10km walk or run; 21km half marathon, and full 42km marathon. The event will be raising awareness of the growing problem of diabetes and obesity. The marathon has the distinction of being the only full road race in Kuwait to be accredited, in the three longer distance categories, by the international marathon accreditation agency.

million, also a 4% increase over the previous year.

Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: "I am very pleased to report the continued steady progress the bank has made in the first nine months of the year. Over the period, we have seen a 7% growth in our operating income and a 12% growth in our net profit, driven by strong double digit growth in retail banking, in line with our strategic intention. We have achieved this while continuing our policy of prudence and good governance, coordinated by a very capable and committed Board of Directors. We continue to invest and improve our products and services, using technology as an enabler. These figures reflect a strong and balanced performance, and underline the commitment of our management team and staff to deliver a better customer experience. I am encouraged by these results and believe the bank is well placed to continue this way."

Cesar Gonzalez-Bueno, Gulf Bank's CEO, added: "We have been able to deliver strong results and continue the positive trend of previous quarters. Gulf Bank's management team, with the support and guidance from the