

Business

EQUATE Group inaugurates its new MEGlobal Oyster Creek site in Texas

Site to build on company's global footprint and benefit Kuwait, US

OYSTER CREEK, US: The EQUATE Group announced the inauguration of its new MEGlobal Oyster Creek site in Oyster Creek, Texas, USA. The momentous occasion was celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony on site, attended by EQUATE shareholders and management.

The world-scale, 750,000 metric-tons-annually (mta) ethylene glycol (EG) manufacturing facility is part of EQUATE's wholly-owned subsidiary, MEGlobal Americas Inc. (MEGlobal). It will produce monoethylene and diethylene glycol, products used in a number of market applications including polyester fibers, polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles and packaging, antifreeze and coolants, paints, resins, deicing fluids, heat transfer fluids and construction materials.

"This is a major achievement for the EQUATE Group and will benefit both Kuwait and the US," said EQUATE President and CEO Dr Ramesh Ramachandran. "With a growing global market for EG products, it will provide us with greater flexibility to satisfy our customers' needs while capitalizing on the US shale gas opportunity. This site builds on our global footprint and is part of our strategy to grow our value-added business as a leading ethylene glycol producer and supplier."

Ramachandran noted the site builds on the long-

standing relationship between its Kuwaiti partner, Petrochemical Industries Company in Kuwait (PIC) and the US partner, Dow Inc, a relationship that was forged during the liberation of Kuwait. It led to the formation of the EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a joint venture between Dow and PIC (42.5 percent each ownership) as well as Boubyan Petrochemicals Co. K.S.C. (BPC) with 9 percent ownership and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Co. (QPIC) with 6 percent ownership.

"The EQUATE Group began with large investments in Kuwait and now comes full circle with the investment in Texas. Our ability to leverage the project execution and operational excellence expertise of Dow allowed us to deliver the project on time and on budget which is a remarkable accomplishment," Ramachandran said. The project achieved several milestones in its construction, including more than three million consecutive safe work hours.

EQUATE Executive Vice President Naser Al-Dousari added, "This is an important milestone in EQUATE history, adding manufacturing capacity on the US Gulf Coast to satisfy customer needs in the region. EQUATE's glycol footprint in the Americas is as large as that in Kuwait. The community in Texas has been very welcoming to this investment and we look forward



OYSTER CREEK, US: The EQUATE Group inaugurates its Oyster Creek site in Oyster Creek, Texas, USA.

to being a part of this region."

The site created 55 new full-time long-term jobs and 25-35 contract jobs. It employed almost 2,000 con-

struction workers at peak. Commercial quantities of finished product are expected to begin shipping by November 2019.

Boursa Kuwait holds workshop on Financial Derivatives Market

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing efforts to further contribute to the development of Kuwait's capital market, Boursa Kuwait organized a consultation workshop regarding derivatives, which was attended by representatives of listed and non-listed investment companies and brokerage firms. This consultation, where the specifications and conditions associated to derivatives was discussed, falls in line with Boursa Kuwait's strategy to diversify products and increase liquidity, the latter of which is a key pillar that supports the development of a more attractive investment platform.

Derivatives will be launched as part of phase four of the Market Developments plan, which was initiated by Boursa Kuwait in 2017 in collaboration with the Capital Markets Authority and the Kuwait Clearing Company. The launch will follow an integrated study of derivatives conducted by Boursa Kuwait, alongside investment companies and other strategic stakeholders. During the session, Boursa Kuwait conducted polls and held a Q&A session where those involved raised their comments and concerns.



Noura Al-Abdulkareem, Acting Head of Markets Sector at Boursa Kuwait, said: "There is no doubt that the trading of derivatives will play a pivotal role in the development of the Kuwaiti capital market. Over the past few years, we have made a substantial difference at Boursa Kuwait and we continue to pioneer this journey of growth and raise the profile of the stock market regionally and internationally. We are constantly expanding our portfolio of products and services, and offering more promising

investment opportunities to increase market liquidity. At Boursa Kuwait, we strive to contribute to the development of Kuwait's economy and participate in the achievement of the country's development goals." This workshop is one of a series of workshops held by Boursa Kuwait in an effort to reinforce the importance of transparency and communication with market participants and the provision of world-class products and services, by discussing market development plans with relevant stakeholders.

Infiniti Al-Babtain continues leasing offer on Infiniti QX50, QX80

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, continues to offer its loyal fans exclusive leasing deal that accompanies the purchase of Infiniti QX50 and QX80 at Al-Rai showroom.

Starting at a leasing price of KD 229 per month, The INFINITI QX50 is the world's first variable compression ratio engine in a production vehicle which was created to fully meet the needs of today's premium car buyers and to deliver on their desire to own the latest masterpiece of technology. The VC-Turbo engine delivers the strong and convincing performance of a V6 and the fuel economy of a 4-cylinder engine - transforming on demand and based on the input of the drivers. Instantly adapting to their needs, the VC-Turbo lets them harness the exhilarating performance of 268 hp and 380 nm at 4,400 rpm of torque. Developed on an entirely new platform, the QX50 features the sophisticated and assuring INFINITI Intelligent All-Wheel Drive.

Drive Assist technologies react instantaneously to critical driving situations, supporting the drivers with a range of empowering 'co-pilot' features, and enabling them to always be in total control. Driver-centric, yet passenger-minded, the QX50 offers a package of technologies to enhance the driving experience, while a calm, connected, and relaxing cabin features an asymmetric layout - designed to meet different needs of the driver and the passengers.

Now starting at a leasing price of KD 399 per month, the QX80 has a refined and spacious cabin that features high-quality materials, a hand-crafted finish and advanced drive-assist technologies. With a taut yet comfort-



oriented suspension, and ample performance from its 5.6-liter V8 engine, the QX80 gives drivers an assured feeling of control and confidence at the wheel. The rear entertainment system has also been upgraded. Higher-resolution screens provide the interface for

connectivity and entertainment devices. The system also now supports 31 languages, up from three in the outgoing QX80. Infiniti Al-Babtain encourages its customers to explore the advantage of the exclusive deal by visiting the designated showroom located in Al-Rai.

ABK customers receive special discounts from Emirates Holidays

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) customers are eligible for an exclusive 10 percent discount on holiday packages from Emirates Holidays when

using any ABK card. Emirates Skywards members will also earn 20 percent bonus miles on Emirates Holidays packages of three nights or more.

To qualify for the offer, bookings must be made by September 30, 2019 and travel is valid until November 30, 2019. Payment must be made with an ABK card. To book online please visit: https://www.emiratesholidays.com/kw_en/promotions/abk or the local retail store at Hamra Tower, 7th Floor or call Emirates Holidays. The discount is already applied to all pricing online.

Economists see ECB cornered into stimulus broadside

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank is set to unveil fresh monetary easing at a meeting tomorrow, analysts agree, under pressure from markets to deliver support to a flagging eurozone economy. It could be a last major move by ECB chief Mario Draghi before handing the reins to outgoing International Monetary Fund chairwoman Christine Lagarde on October 31.

The single currency is not as fragile as when Draghi promised "whatever it takes" to save it in 2012 — peaking in a 2.6-trillion-euro bond-buying scheme from 2015-18 and negative rates on banks' deposits in Frankfurt. But central bankers have for years failed to hit their inflation target of just below 2.0 percent, despite unprecedented interventions.

And now growth is slowing as the eurozone confronts US-led trade wars, weakness in emerging markets and the risk of a no-deal Brexit. In the second quarter, economic activity in the bloc expanded by just 0.2 percent compared with January-March, while annual inflation fell to 1.0 percent in July. Its leading economy, Germany, is forecast to slide into recession in the third quarter.

Policymakers' insistence that their goal still holds-and Draghi's June declaration that the ECB could even aim to overshoot it, compensating for years of below-target price growth-have prompted high expectations for September action on financial markets.

"If the ECB were to disappoint in September, it would need to do more later, with lower chances of success," said Pictet Wealth Management strate-

gist Frederik Ducrozet. He pointed especially to the risk of markets' expectations for future inflation becoming "de-anchored" from the central bank's aim. The resultant bets on lower future inflation could turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. Ducrozet suggested Draghi could announce 600 billion euros (\$660 billion) worth of new bond purchases, as well as a cut in the deposit rate banks pay to park cash with the ECB, from -0.4 to -0.5 percent. But "dissensions within the governing council could lead to a sub-optimal decision" that leaves asset purchases for another day, he added.

Council divided?

Governors from the weightiest eurozone nations, including France, Germany and the Netherlands, are skeptical about new bond-buying. "Is it necessary to restart purchases immediately? That's a question we'll have to discuss," Bank of France head Francois Villeroy de Galhau said last week. Villeroy is normally seen as one of the council's "doves", more favorable to monetary easing than so-called "hawks", who mainly hail from northern and German-speaking Europe. The German and Dutch central bank chiefs have also spoken up in recent weeks. And ECB vice-president Luis de Guindos insisted in late August that the institution is "data-dependent".

"Indications from market expectations cannot replace our policy judgment," de Guindos said. For his part, Draghi has stoked confidence in a policy move at public appearances over the summer. In July he reiterated that governors were weighing the "possibility of actions in the future, if there is no improvement" in economic conditions. New ECB staff growth and inflation forecasts, expected to be lower than in June, will provide fodder for the doves' arguments at this week's meeting.

The June outlook already trimmed predictions for both measures, with prices expected to grow just 1.6 percent in 2021 — far short of the target. — AFP



This file photo shows the headquarters of the European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. — AFP