

## Agthia launches eZad

ABU DHABI, Sept 27, (Agencies): Agthia Group PJSC, a leading regional food and beverages company, today announced the launch of eZad, an innovative, convenient and efficient business to business eAuction platform, where buyers from across the globe can buy dates in bulk from sellers in the UAE.

eZad makes buying and selling of dates faster, more transparent and profitable for all stakeholders. The platform is committed to helping farmers grow better dates while enabling wholesale date buyers to grow their business.

In the first phase, eZad will source dates from farmers in the UAE and begin listing from the start of the harvest season in August. Subsequently, eZad's scope will be gradually expanded to other countries.

Farmers will list their dates for auction in eZad through a trustworthy certification system that grades dates under reliable market standards, supported by a quality guarantee built on the extensive experience and reputation inherited from Al Foah.

The auction listing will be made available on eZad to buyers around the world for 48 hours. Buyers will be able to search and filter the listings based on preferences such as price, date type, quantity and quality.

Buyers can collect the dates purchased from one of eZad's warehouses or select from any of the value-added services on offer, including storage, packaging, loading, fumigation, washing and delivering the dates to world-wide locations.

Alan Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Agthia Group said: "The eZad platform has been created to bring transparency, convenience and standardisation to the dates industry, through the technology and services we provide. Our goal is to link small and big farmers directly to bulk date buyers via a single, simple and innovative platform."

# China's tech self-reliance plans hurt growth – group

EU Chamber appeals to Beijing to reverse course

BEIJING, Sept 27, (AP): The ruling Communist Party's campaign to tighten control over China's industries and use less foreign technology is slashing economic growth, a foreign business group warned Thursday.

The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China appealed to Beijing to reverse course and open state-dominated markets wider.

Its report adds to warnings about the costs of Beijing's strategy at a time when economic growth is in long-term decline and the workforce is aging and shrinking. The party's plans are straining relations with Washington and other governments that complain they violate its trade commitments.

President Xi Jinping's government risks stifling innovation by tightening restrictions on internet and other private sector companies and trying to create replacements for U.S., European and Japanese processor chip and other technology, the EU Chamber warned. Beijing is prodding banks, automakers and others to use Chinese technology when foreign alternatives might be more effective.

"We see that actually they're willing to sacrifice certain growth potential for, frankly, economic control and political control," the Chamber president, Joerg Wuttke, told reporters.

The EU Chamber estimates that with fully fledged market-style reforms, China's economic output per person could increase by 3 1/2 times in the 25 years through 2046, according to Wuttke. But he said output might only double if Beijing enforces its self-reliance plans.

"China risks punching below its weight," Wuttke said.

The Chamber cited an IMF estimate that China is only 30% as productive as the United States, Japan or Germany.

In a report, the Chamber appealed to Beijing to open telecom, finance and other state-dominated industries wider to private and foreign competitors. It made 930 recommendations including



A visitor looks at digital devices promoting the services for Alibaba during the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) held in Beijing, China, Monday, Sept. 6, 2021. (AP)

calling on regulators to clarify an avalanche of cybersecurity, personal data and other rules and make sure they only apply where needed.

China should "increase integration into the global economy and steer away from 'self-sufficiency,'" the report said.

China's economy is forecast by the International Monetary Fund and private sector economists to grow by up to 8.5% this year as it rebounds from the coronavirus pandemic. But growth is expected to fall below 5% after 2025 at a time when its aging population will require more social welfare spending.

The Chamber cited an IMF estimate that China is only 30% as productive as the United States, Japan or Germany.

The Chamber, which represents some 1,700 companies, also appealed to Beijing to allow in more foreign businesspeople and other

visitors. Some employees who were deemed economically essential and were caught abroad when Beijing suspended travel in early 2020 due to the coronavirus have been allowed to return, but others say they were refused visas.

Members of the American Chamber of Commerce in China issued a similar appeal for Beijing to resume normal visa services in a survey released Sept. 10.

China's latest census found only 845,697 foreign nationals in the country of 1.4 billion people, or only 0.06% of the total, according to the Chamber. Wuttke said that might be the smallest percentage for any country.

The number of foreign residents in Beijing and Shanghai, cities with a combined population of 45 million people, fell by 60% from 2019 to 127,000 last year, or less than half the number in Luxembourg, one of Europe's smallest countries.

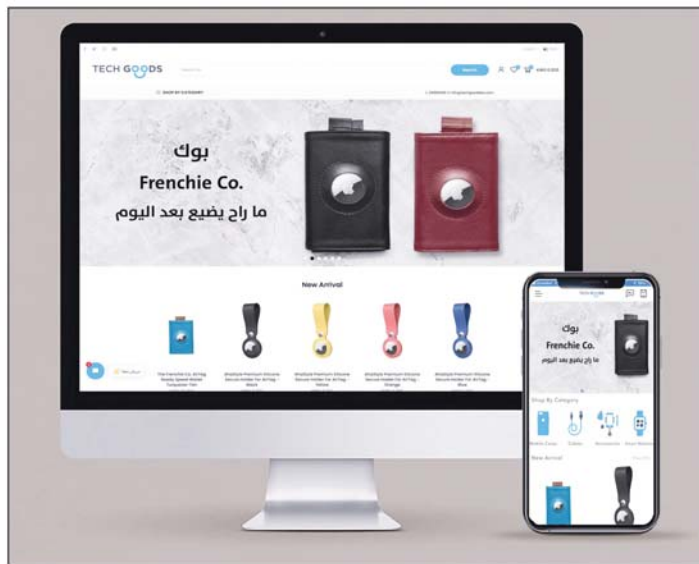
## Tech Goods Website and Application Change the Online Buying Experience

Tech Goods Company, www.techgoodskw.com, a Kuwaiti company specialized in smartphone accessories, announced the launch of the Tech Goods application for iPhone and Android users to provide competitive prices and services that fulfill the desires of customers and meet their different needs for all types of smartphone accessories.

Tech Goods, the first of its kind in Kuwait, focuses on serving customers through electronic platforms, being close to the customer at all times, and ordering through the website, application, WhatsApp, and Instagram programs. The company ensures in its policy that the purchase request is very easy and can be made with the push of a single button. Due to the developed technologies used by the company, it is easy for the user, after registering, to place the order with one click after choosing the product he wants. Delivery will be done immediately without the hassle of registering every time.

Tech Goods has agencies for international brands specialized in smartphone accessories and is proud that its products are original and from well-known international brands.

Tech Goods added that it offers customers the latest electronic



accessories and trends for smartphones and smart solutions for the home, in addition to exclusive global products available only to its customers, with gift wrapping service, which enables the customer to order the product they want with gift wrapping for all occasions so that the customer can order the product and send it as a gift to anyone with ease.

The company also has exclusive offers to application users, through which the customer can get the best prices.

In addition, the company indicated that customers could view original products from quality international brands,

available offers, and request items through social media channels, such as Instagram, or through the website, application, and WhatsApp. The company provides the ability to choose the product and submit the request electronically while providing a secure payment service through Kent or Visa credit cards.

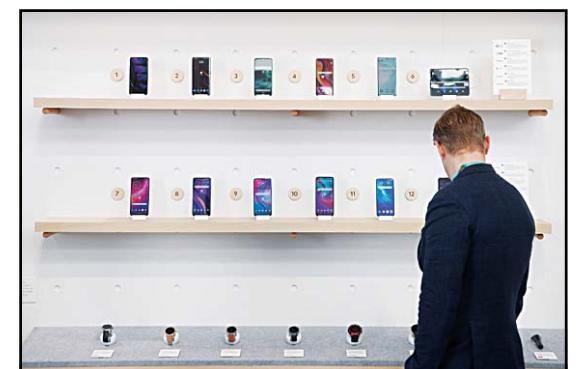
The company confirmed that the delivery service is available in all governorates and regions of the State of Kuwait and within a short period of time. Tech Goods provides its services in all Gulf countries, where courier delivery service is available at competitive prices.

## HNA Group says chairman & CEO detained by police

BEIJING, Sept 27, (AP): The chairman and CEO of HNA Group, the Chinese airline operator that ran into financial trouble following a global acquisition spree beginning in 2014, have been detained on suspicion of committing crimes, the company announced Friday.

Chen Feng and Tan Xiangdong were "taken under compulsory measures" by police in the southern island province of Hainan due to "suspicion of crime," the company said on its social media account. It gave no details but said operations "are not affected."

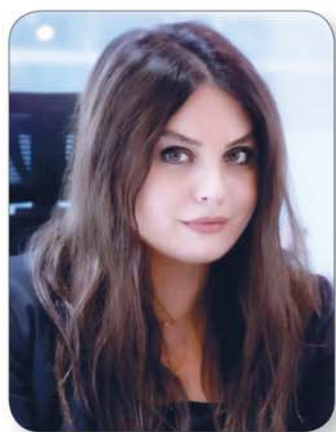
HNA Group, which operates Hainan Airlines and other carriers, was struggling with \$75 billion in debt when last year's shutdown of global travel to fight the coronavirus pandemic devastated its aviation business. The Hainan government took control in February 2020.



In this file photo, the Google exhibit building shows off a variety of devices with Google Assistant, including Android smartphones and Wear OS smartwatches during the CES tech show in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. (AP)

In line with the company's corporate social responsibility framework

## stc launches "Weyak" initiative



Danah Al-Jasem

Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the launch of its new initiative "Weyak", which focuses on enabling the digital transformation journey and supporting SMEs and local start-ups.

The concept behind the initiative stems from the commitment stc upholds to the local economy in backing and supporting companies in their gradual return to normalcy. Through the Company's effort to stand by ventures and businesses owned by nationals, hence the title "Weyak", stc aims to provide SMEs exposure to their services to help in lifting them up after falling during the challenges faced in the market due to the pandemic.

stc indicated in a statement that through the "Weyak" initiative, the Company will grant participating SMEs and start-ups with the opportunity to promote and showcase their products and services. This includes showcasing their offerings through a series of organized activities in coordination with stc.

**Take your benefits further with offers from "weyak".**

**Join us now.**

"weyak" is an exclusive initiative from stc aimed at empowering SMEs. As the B2B arm of the company, solutions by stc joins the effort by bringing you amazing offers on mobility services, led by stc, connectivity solutions and IT products. Join us now and give your business a great start.

Hurry, this is a limited-time offer.

Terms & Conditions apply

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☎ 366 📧 business@solutions.com.kw

stc mentioned that SMEs participating in the initiative will also have the opportunity to be exposed to customized offers and promotions provided by stc's business arm, solutions by stc, that are tailored to suit the needs of business owners. Additionally, stc will be promoting the participants' projects through the Company's social media platforms, assisting the business owners in presenting their solutions to a wider

potential customer base.

Commenting on this initiative, Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "Through this initiative, we aim to provide SMEs with supporting services that will grant them the exposure they need online as well as exposing them to tailored packages and solutions with the sole objective of streamlining and enhancing their operations. We will also be providing them with around the

clock support to assist them in utilizing the full breadth of our offerings. Having said that, our focus is to assist our customers by providing them with the proper means to digitally transform their businesses and operations."

Al-Jasem added, "Our initiative builds on the values that stc holds in implementing its strategy to support SMEs. We were keen to connect with companies while simultaneously implementing our CSR agenda, believing in the important role the private sector plays in the community. Through our various initiatives we believe that we can contribute in positively impacting the local business, as well as the Kuwaiti society, in line with the Kuwaiti 2035 vision."

Al-Jasem concluded, "We will spare no effort in implementing the framework and initiatives under our CSR strategy in a way that enhances and empowers our society. We believe that this will ultimately build a balanced and sustainable work environment fit to empower the younger generation."

stc has launched numerous initiatives specifically directed towards supporting SMEs, start-ups, and entrepreneurs. In this regard, the Company affirmed its position to continue providing pioneering and innovative solutions that aim to support and solve some of the challenges faced by the sector due to the unforeseen market challenges. This affirmation also runs parallel to stc's strategy to enable digital transformation in Kuwait.

## Google in court to appeal '18 Android antitrust case

LONDON, Sept 27, (AP): Google headed to a top European Union court Monday to appeal a record EU antitrust penalty imposed for stifling competition through the dominance of its Android operating system.

The company is fighting a 2018 decision from the EU's executive Commission, the bloc's top antitrust enforcer, that resulted in the 4.34 billion-euro (\$5 billion) fine - still the biggest ever fine Brussels has imposed for anticompetitive behavior.

It's one of three antitrust penalties totaling more than \$8 billion that the commission hit Google with between 2017 and 2019. The others focused on shopping and search, and the California company is appealing all three. While the penalties involved huge sums, critics point out that Google can easily afford them and that the fines haven't done much to widen competition.

In its original decision, the commission said Google's practices restrict competition and reduce choices for consumers.

Google, however, plans to argue that free and open source Android has led to lower-priced phones and spurred competition with its chief rival, Apple.

"Android has created more choice for everyone, not less, and supports thousands of successful businesses in Europe and around the world. This case isn't supported by the facts or the law," the company said as the five-day hearing opened at the European Court of Justice's General Court.

The EU Commission declined to comment. The court's decision is not expected until next year.

Android is the most popular mobile operating system, beating even Apple's iOS, and is found on four out of five devices in Europe.

The Commission ruled that Google broke EU rules by requiring smartphone makers to take a bundle of Google apps if they wanted any at all, and prevented them from selling devices with altered versions of Android.

The bundle contains 11 apps, including YouTube, Maps and Gmail, but regulators focused on the three that had the biggest market share: Google Search, Chrome and the company's Play Store for apps.

Google's position is that because Android is open source and free, phone makers or consumers can decide for themselves which apps to install on their devices. And because it's the only one bearing the costs of developing and maintaining Android, Google has to find ways to recoup that expense, so its solution is to include apps that will generate revenue, namely Search and Chrome.

The company also argues that just because its apps come pre-installed on Android phones, it doesn't mean users are excluded from downloading rival services.

The Commission also took issue with Google's payments to wireless carriers and phone makers to exclusively pre-install the Google Search app. But Google said those deals amounted to less than 5% of the market, so they couldn't possibly hurt rivals.

Following the ruling, Google made some changes to address the issues, including giving European Android users a choice of browser and search app, and charging device makers to pre-install its apps.