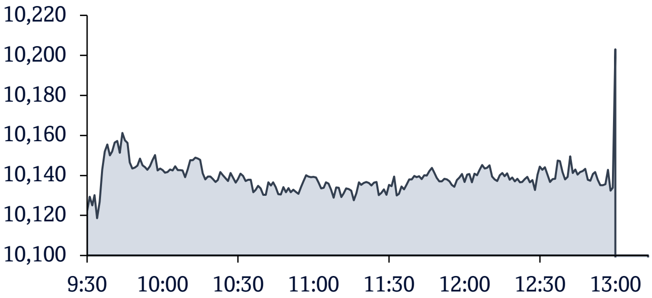
## QSE Intra-Day Movement




## Qatar Commentary

The QE Index rose 0.7% to close at 10,203.0. Gains were led by the Insurance and Banks & Financial Services indices, gaining 1.5% and 1.1%, respectively. Top gainers were Dukhan Bank and Qatar Insurance Company, rising 2.4% and 2.3%, respectively. Among the top losers, Qatar Fuel Company fell 2.3%, while Qatari Investors Group was down 2.0%.

## GCC Commentary

*Saudi Arabia:* The TASI Index gained 0.2% to close at 12,145.2. Gains were led by the Diversified Financials and Consumer Services indices, rising 1.8% and 1.0%, respectively. Allianz Saudi Fransi Cooperative Insurance Co. rose 6.4%, while Kingdom Holding Co. was up 5.0%.

*Dubai:* The DFM Index fell 0.2% to close at 4,325.4. The Consumer Staples index declined 1.3%, while the Financials index fell 0.3%. National General Insurance Co declined 4.8%, while Al Ramz Corporation Investment and Development was down 3.1%.

*Abu Dhabi:* The ADX General Index gained 0.6% to close at 9,284.9. The Telecommunication index rose 3.6%, while the Real Estate index gained 3.0%. Umm Al Qaiwain General Investment rose 6.2%, while Sharjah Cement was up 6.1%.

*Kuwait:* The Kuwait All Share Index gained marginally to close at 7,180.9. The Energy index rose 1.8%, while the Banks index gained 0.2%. Real Estate Trade Centers Company rose 20.0%, while Kuwait Hotels was up 10.0%.

*Oman:* The MSM 30 Index gained 0.6% to close at 4,746.4. Gains were led by the Financial and Industrial indices, rising 0.6% and 0.5%, respectively. Musandam Power Company rose 9.4%, while Shell Oman Marketing was up 8.1%.

*Bahrain:* The BHB Index fell marginally to close at 1,957.5. Bahrain Car Parks Company declined 6.6%, while GFH Financial Group was down 1.2%.

| Market Indicators | 29 Aug 24 | 28 Aug 24 | %Chg. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Value Traded (QR mn) | 586.1 | 431.5 | 35.8 |
| Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn) | 591,637.6 | 587,385.8 | 0.7 |
| Volume (mn) | 153.1 | 181.3 | (15.6) |
| Number of Transactions | 16,054 | 15,864 | 1.2 |
| Companies Traded | 52 | 50 | 4.0 |
| Market Breadth | 35:12 | 12:35 | – |

| Market Indices | Close | 1D% | WTD% | YTD% | TTM P/E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Return | 23,233.54 | 0.7 | 0.8 | (0.0) | 11.2 |
| All Share Index | 3,625.74 | 0.7 | 1.0 | (0.1) | 11.6 |
| Banks | 4,391.84 | 1.1 | 1.3 | (4.1) | 9.4 |
| Industrials | 4,202.47 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 2.1 | 15.8 |
| Transportation | 5,475.84 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 27.8 | 13.9 |
| Real Estate | 1,531.47 | 0.9 | 3.1 | 2.0 | 22.1 |
| Insurance | 2,361.63 | 1.5 | 2.4 | (10.3) | 167.0 |
| Telecoms | 1,727.99 | (0.4) | 0.4 | 1.3 | 11.1 |
| Consumer Goods and Services | 7,590.66 | (1.0) | (0.6) | 0.2 | 17.3 |
| Al Rayan Islamic Index | 4,767.59 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 14.2 |

| GCC Top Gainers## | Exchange | Close# | 1D% | Vol. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phoenix Group | Abu Dhabi | 1.66 | 5.1 | 13,666.1 | (25.9) |
| Kingdom Holding Co. | Saudi Arabia | 9.24 | 5.0 | 2,235.6 | 29.2 |
| Rabigh Refining & Petro. | Saudi Arabia | 8.20 | 3.8 | 13,165.5 | (20.7) |
| Emirtaes Telecommunication | Abu Dhabi | 18.14 | 3.7 | 10,627.7 | (7.6) |
| Bank Sohar | Oman | 0.14 | 3.6 | 11,691.8 | 49.8 |

| GCC Top Losers## | Exchange | Close# | 1D% | Vol. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qatar Fuel Company | Qatar | 14.55 | (2.3) | 1,851.4 | (12.2) |
| Bupa Arabia for Coop. Ins. | Saudi Arabia | 232.40 | (1.9) | 287.6 | 8.9 |
| Arabian Drilling | Saudi Arabia | 117.60 | (1.8) | 872.8 | (38.4) |
| ELM Co. | Saudi Arabia | 1002.2 | (1.8) | 176.1 | 23.0 |
| Arab National Bank | Saudi Arabia | 19.30 | (1.7) | 7,833.2 | 1.7 |

*Source: Bloomberg (# in Local Currency) (## GCC Top gainers/ losers derived from the S&P GCC Composite Large Mid Cap Index)*

| QSE Top Gainers | Close* | 1D% | Vol. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dukhan Bank | 3.810 | 2.4 | 9,245.9 | (4.2) |
| Qatar Insurance Company | 2.154 | 2.3 | 52.6 | (16.8) |
| Masraf Al Rayan | 2.300 | 2.2 | 13,768.9 | (13.4) |
| Mannai Corporation | 3.843 | 1.6 | 310.8 | (8.5) |
| Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding | 1.650 | 1.5 | 10,966.1 | (7.7) |

| QSE Top Losers | Close* | 1D% | Vol. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qatar Fuel Company | 14.55 | (2.3) | 1,851.4 | (12.2) |
| Qatari Investors Group | 1.460 | (2.0) | 8,371.6 | (11.1) |
| Al Faleh Educational Holding Co. | 0.840 | (1.8) | 10,953.2 | (0.8) |
| Widam Food Company | 2.856 | (1.7) | 1,053.7 | 21.0 |
| Qatar Cinema & Film Distribution | 2.663 | (1.4) | 7.6 | (8.2) |

| QSE Top Volume Trades | Close* | 1D% | Vol. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Masraf Al Rayan | 2.300 | 2.2 | 13,768.9 | (13.4) |
| Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding | 1.650 | 1.5 | 10,966.1 | (7.7) |
| Al Faleh Educational Holding Company | 0.840 | (1.8) | 10,953.2 | (0.8) |
| Dukhan Bank | 3.810 | 2.4 | 9,245.9 | (4.2) |
| QNB Group | 15.84 | 1.2 | 9,226.0 | (4.2) |

| QSE Top Value Trades | Close* | 1D% | Val. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| QNB Group | 15.84 | 1.2 | 146,016.6 | (4.2) |
| Qatar Islamic Bank | 19.54 | 0.9 | 41,017.8 | (9.1) |
| Industries Qatar | 12.90 | 0.8 | 39,969.9 | (1.4) |
| Dukhan Bank | 3.810 | 2.4 | 34,775.7 | (4.2) |
| Masraf Al Rayan | 2.300 | 2.2 | 31,452.9 | (13.4) |

| Regional Indices | Close | 1D% | WTD% | MTD% | YTD% | Exch. Val. Traded ($ mn) | Exchange Mkt. Cap. ($ mn) | P/E** | P/B** | Dividend Yield |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qatar* | 10,203.04 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.5 | (5.8) | 161.26 | 162,227.0 | 11.3 | 1.3 | 4.2 |
| Dubai | 4,325.45 | (0.2) | (0.2) | 1.3 | 6.5 | 134.56 | 197,502.4 | 8.4 | 1.3 | 5.5 |
| Abu Dhabi | 9,284.93 | 0.6 | 0.6 | (0.6) | (3.1) | 730.28 | 695,903.8 | 16.8 | 2.6 | 2.1 |
| Saudi Arabia | 12,145.15 | 0.2 | (0.4) | 0.3 | 1.5 | 3,262.89 | 2,727,849.9 | 20.1 | 2.4 | 3.6 |
| Kuwait | 7,180.92 | 0.0 | 0.2 | (0.8) | 5.3 | 281.26 | 153,335.1 | 19.1 | 1.7 | 3.3 |
| Oman | 4,746.41 | 0.6 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 5.1 | 10.58 | 24,144.5 | 12.2 | 0.9 | 5.3 |
| Bahrain | 1,957.49 | (0.0) | 1.0 | (0.6) | (0.7) | 5.85 | 20,229.0 | 7.7 | 0.7 | 8.9 |

*Source: Bloomberg, Qatar Stock Exchange, Tadawul, Muscat Securities Market and Dubai Financial Market (** TTM; * Value traded ($ mn) do not include special trades if any)*

## Qatar Market Commentary

- The QE Index rose 0.7% to close at 10,203.0. The Insurance and Banks & Financial Services indices led the gains. The index rose on the back of buying support from Foreign shareholders despite selling pressure from Qatari, Arab and GCC shareholders.
- Dukhan Bank and Qatar Insurance Company were the top gainers, rising 2.4% and 2.3%, respectively. Among the top losers, Qatar Fuel Company fell 2.3%, while Qatari Investors Group was down 2.0%.
- Volume of shares traded on Thursday fell by 15.6% to 153.1mn from 181.4mn on Wednesday. However, as compared to the 30-day moving average of 121.0mn, volume for the day was 26.5% higher. Masraf Al Rayan and Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding were the most active stocks, contributing 9.0% and 7.2% to the total volume, respectively.

| Overall Activity | Buy%* | Sell%* | Net (QR) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Qatari Individuals | 14.28% | 15.77% | (88,740,012.72) |
| Qatari Institutions | 14.66% | 17.16% | (14,669,586.83) |
| **Qatari** | **28.93%** | **32.93%** | **(103,409,599.55)** |
| GCC Individuals | 0.20% | 0.34% | (780,973.79) |
| GCC Institutions | 0.28% | 4.81% | (26,545,508.03) |
| **GCC** | **0.48%** | **5.14%** | **(27,326,481.82)** |
| Arab Individuals | 5.76% | 6.23% | (2,774,990.62) |
| Arab Institutions | 0.00% | 0.00% | - |
| **Arab** | **5.76%** | **6.23%** | **(2,774,990.62)** |
| Foreigners Individuals | 1.14% | 2.02% | (5,191,260.78) |
| Foreigners Institutions | 63.69% | 53.68% | 58,702,332.77 |
| **Foreigners** | **64.83%** | **55.70%** | **53,511,071.99** |

*Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (*as a% of traded value)*

## Global Economic Data

**Global Economic Data**

| Date | Market | Source | Indicator | Period | Actual | Consensus | Previous |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 08-29 | US | Bureau of Economic Analysis | GDP Annualized QoQ | 2Q S | 3.00% | 2.80% | 2.80% |
| 08-29 | US | Department of Labor | Initial Jobless Claims | 24-Aug | 231k | 232k | 233k |
| 08-29 | US | U.S. Department of Energy | EIA Natural Gas Storage Change | 23-Aug | 35.00 | 35.00 | 35.00 |
| 08-30 | EU | Eurostat | CPI Estimate YoY | Aug | 2.20% | 2.20% | 2.60% |
| 08-30 | EU | Eurostat | CPI MoM | Aug P | 0.20% | 0.20% | 0.00% |
| 08-30 | EU | Eurostat | CPI Core YoY | Aug P | 2.80% | 2.80% | 2.90% |
| 08-30 | EU | Eurostat | Unemployment Rate | Jul | 6.40% | 6.50% | 6.50% |

## Qatar

- **Trading for August MSCI Quarterly Index Review saw net flows of more than $15mn** - Trading related to MSCI Equity Indexes August 2024 Review saw net inflows of around $5mn for QNBK and $3mn each for QIBK and MARK. Net outflows were registered by QFLS (~$3mn) and QIGD (~$1.6mn). (QNBFS Research)
- **QCB bills auction receives bids worth QR13.1bn; total allocated amount QR4.5bn -** Qatar Central Bank (QCB) bills auction received bids worth QR13.1bn in place of the total allocated amount of QR4.5bn, the central bank announced on Thursday. The allocations were for six tenors ranging from seven days to 336 days, QCB said. QR300mn was allocated for a tap issuance for seven days with a yield of 5.7815%. QR1bn was allocated for a tap issuance for 35 days with a yield of 5.7363%. QR1bn was allocated for a tap issuance for 91 days with a yield of 5.5390%. QR1bn was allocated for a tap issuance for 182 days with a yield of 5.1730%. QR1bn was allocated for a tap issuance for 273 days with a yield of 4.8888%. QR200mn was allocated for a tap issuance for 336 days with a yield of 4.7478%, QCB said. (Gulf Times)
- **Construction of Algerian Qatari German Hospital begins -** The construction works for the Algerian Qatari German Hospital have commenced in the new city of Sidi Abdellah, west of the Algerian capital. The ceremony was attended by the Algerian Minister of Health and Population HE Abdulhaq Seyahi, Minister of Finance HE Aziz Faid, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development HE Youssef Cherfa, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning HE Mohamed Tarek Belaribi, HE Faisal Bin Taleb, Minister of Labor Employment and Social Security, HE Ali Oun, Minister of Industry and Pharmaceutical Production, Governor of the State of Algeria HE Mohamed Abdel Nour Rabhi, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Algerian Republic HE Abdulaziz Ali Al-Naama, Eng. Mohamed bin Badr Al-Sada - Group CEO of Estithmar Holding, and Joe Hazel - CEO of Apex Health (previously Elegancia Healthcare) – a subsidiary of Estithmar Holding, in addition to Kamal Mansouri, Vice Chairman and General Manager of the Algerian National Investment Fund and Mr. Ameen Badreesy, board member of the Algerian Qatari Healthcare Services Company representing the Algerian National Investment Fund. During the ceremony, HE Aziz Faid, Minister of Finance highlighted the project and the strong relations between the State of Qatar and the Republic of Algeria, he said: “This is the first outcome of the fruitful strong relations between the two countries. This project wouldn’t have been developed if it wasn’t for the utmost support of the authorities. It is expected to enhance the healthcare services Algerians receive”. His Excellency has also highlighted the impact of the project on both the healthcare and financial sectors in Algeria and stated: “we consider this project a leap in our strategy to cope with the ever-evolving challenges, as it is equipped with the latest technology which will address elevated medical services that were not offered locally previously.” From Doha, Qatar, Mohamed Moutaz Al Khayyat, Chairman of Estithmar Holding has expressed his happiness with the rapid development of the project from signing to commencing constructions. Al Khayyat said: “The Algerian Qatari German Hospital is another step in Estithmar Holding’s promising expansion plans in the Healthcare sector. We value our partnership with the Algerian government in pursuing this leading project which will transform healthcare services in Algeria and stand as a model of collaboration between our two countries”. Eng. Mohammed bin Badr Al-Sada Group CEO of Estithmar Holding expressed his satisfaction with the commencement of the construction works for the pioneering project of Estithmar Holding Company in Algeria stating that: "The Algerian Qatari German Hospital features 300 beds, 30 intensive care units, 15 operating rooms, 40 outpatient clinics and 20 emergency bays operated by a highly skilled medical team. It will also combine world-class medical competencies and the latest diagnostic and therapeutic technologies. The hospital is expected to serve more than 250,000 visitors to the outpatient clinics in addition to 25,000 inpatients annually and is scheduled to open in 2026.” The hospital caters to a specific set of medical needs of Algerian citizens, offering specialized health services such as complex heart treatment, liver transplantation, neurosurgery, scoliosis, in addition to tumor surgery, chemotherapy, among other services which will contribute to reducing the need for Algerians to seek such treatments abroad. Eng. Mohamed bin Badr Al-Sada expressed his gratitude to all stakeholders of the project, "On behalf of myself, the Chairman, and the Board of Directors of Estithmar Holding, we extend our deepest appreciation to the Ministry of Health and Population, our partners in the National Investment Fund, and all those who have contributed to the success of this leading project. Which will be a cornerstone in the development of Algeria’s healthcare sector, providing significant benefits to the Algerian people and economy.” During his speech at the ceremony

of the hospital's construction works, Al-Sada praised the promising investment climate in the Algerian Republic, remarked: “We have great confidence in the investment opportunities in Algeria. We are currently exploring additional projects in healthcare, tourism, construction, and other sectors.” The ceremony concluded with a site inspection to mark the commencement of construction for the Algerian Qatari German Hospital, attended by representatives from the Algerian government, Estithmar holding and the National Investment Fund. (Peninsula Qatar)

- **NPC: Qatar's industrial producers' price index increases in July 2024 -** Qatar's producers' price index (PPI), which measures the average changes in prices received by domestic producers for their output, zoomed 7.19% year-on-year this July on surge in the index of hydrocarbons and certain manufactured products such as rubber and plastics, refined petroleum products, and cement, according to the official estimates. The country's PPI was up 0.6% month-on-month in the review period, mainly due to increase in the indices of refined petroleum products and cement, said the figures released by the National Planning Council (NPC). The PPI measures inflation from the perspective of costs to industry or producers of products as it measures price changes before they reach consumers. The NPC had released a new PPI series in late 2015. With a base of 2013, it draws on an updated sampling frame and new weights. The previous sampling frame dates from 2006, when the Qatari economy was much smaller than today and the range of products made domestically much narrower. The mining PPI, which carries the maximum weight of 82.46%, reported a 7.55% increase year-on-year in July 2024 owing to a 7.57% jump in the extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas and 0.04% in index of other mining and quarrying. The mining sector reported a 0.6% rise on a monthly basis in July 2024 on a 0.6% expansion in the extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas and 0.6% in other mining and quarrying. The manufacturing sector PPI, which has a weight of 15.85% in the basket, shot up 5.52% year-on-year in July 2024 on account of 19.97% expansion in the index of rubber and plastics products, 7.3% in refined petroleum products, 5.97% in chemicals and chemical products, 5.15% in cement and other non-metallic mineral products, 2.37% in beverages and 2.17% in food products. Nevertheless, there was 1.51% shrinkage in the index of basic metals and 0.49% in printing and reproduction of recorded media in the review period. The manufacturing sector had seen a 0.78% month-on-month growth this July on 2.08% increase in the index of refined petroleum products, 1.95% in cement and other non-metallic mineral products, 0.52% in rubber and plastics, 0.51% in basic metals and 0.36% in chemicals and chemical products; even as there was a 0.16% decline in the index of printing and reproduction of recorded media. The index of electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply reported 0.04% and 2.45% contraction year-on-year and month-on-month respectively in July 2024. The index of water supply was seen gaining 10.12% and 3% on annualized and monthly basis respectively in the review period. (Gulf Times)
- **‘Qatar’s digital payments market to witness QR31.02bn transactions in 2024’ -** The fintech sector in Qatar has experienced remarkable growth, presenting numerous opportunities for economic transformation and advancement. As reported by Statista, the digital payments market in Qatar is anticipated to achieve a total transaction value of QR31.02bn ($8.52bn) by 2024. Furthermore, this market is projected to exhibit an annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.37%, culminating in an estimated total of QR42.78bn ($11.75bn) by 2028.The report highlights that 2024 will witness substantial expansion within the industry, with digital investment emerging as the largest segment, boasting QR12.23m ($3.36m) in assets under management. The average assets under management (AUM) per user in the digital investment sector are expected to reach QR1,760.55 ($483.60) in 2024, while revenue growth in this market is projected to be 14.48% in 2025. Additionally, digital commerce is identified as Qatar’s largest market, with a forecasted total transaction value of $8.25bn in 2024.In a global context, China is expected to lead with the highest cumulative transaction value, reaching $3,744bn in 2024. It would be recalled that the Qatar Central Bank (QCB) initiated a fintech strategy in 2023, aligning with the Qatar National Vision 2030 to foster diversification and innovation within the financial sector. With the rise of ‘Buy-Now-Pay-Later’ (BNPL) services in the region, the central bank established bnPL guidelines in 2023, which include licensing requirements and consumer protection measures. Earlier this year, QCB approved five companies to offer bnPL solutions. During the launch of the strategy last year, QCB Governor H E Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud Al Thani articulated that the vision for financial technology is centered on development, diversification, and enhancing the competitiveness of Qatar’s financial technology and services sector through innovative infra-structure and solutions that improve customer experience. Recently, QCB unveiled the Express Sandbox, marking a pioneering initiative in the Middle East. The Express Sandbox is an accelerated program aimed at enabling faster market entry for solutions or innovations that exhibit product readiness and potential, particularly within the fintech sector. This initiative is accessible to financial institutions, licensed fintech firms, startups, and technology companies collaborating with licensed financial entities, both domestically and internationally. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Real estate trading volume exceeds QR229mn this week -** The volume of real estate trading in sales contracts at the Department of Real Estate Registration at the Ministry of Justice reached QR 229mn for the week of August 18 to 22, 2024. According to the weekly Real Estate Bulletin, sales contracts totaled QR205,551,967, while sales contracts specifically for residential units amounted to QR23,493,340. The bulletin outlined a diverse range of properties traded during this period, including vacant lands, houses, residential buildings, a residential commercial building, shops, and residential units. The report indicates that real estate transactions were concentrated in several key municipalities: Doha, Al Rayyan, Al Daayen, Umm Salal, Al Khor and Al Dakhira, Al Wakrah, Al Shamal, as well as popular areas such as The Pearl Island and Lusail. The data reflects a significant increase in trading volume compared to the previous week, where the real estate sales contracts registered at the Ministry of Justice from August 11 to 15 surpassed QR 184mn. This rise in trading volume indicates robust activity and demand in Qatar’s real estate market, driven by a diverse portfolio of properties across different municipalities. The sustained interest in various types of real estate, from vacant land to residential units, suggests a positive trend in the property market, influenced by favorable economic conditions and continuous infrastructure development across the country. (Qatar Tribune)
- **Residential transaction volume surges by 35% in Q2 2024 -** The residential sales in Qatar created a positive impact in the months from April to June this year as the transaction volume increased by 35% as per ValuStrat’s latest findings. Experts note that this surge may be partly attributed to the recent developments witnessed in mortgage regulations, which projects 15% annual growth. Commenting on the market, Anum Hassan, Head of Research, Qatar said “In the second quarter, Qatar’s residential real estate market maintained stable capital values, while rental rates experienced a decline, as reported by the ValuStrat Price Index (VPI).” On the other hand, the median transacted ticket size for residential units grew by 5.6% yearly and 1.8% QoQ. Meanwhile, Doha registered 26% of the total residential transactions, while Al Rayyan accounted for another 33%. Muaither, Al Khor, Al Kharaitiyat, Umm Garn, and Umm Salal Ali reported the highest volume of transactions of residential houses in Q2 2024. However, The Pearl Qatar and Al Qassar experienced a 33% decline in the total sales value together with a 28% decrease coming from their transaction volume every quarter. As per the ValuStrat Price Index data, Residential Capital Values remained steady in Q2 but fell by 1% annually at 96.6 points, in comparison with 100 base points as of the first quarter of 2021. The report said: “Valuations within the apartments segment continued to stabilize with no change compared to the previous quarter, approaching QR10,265 per sq m. These prices have consistently held steady over the past two years.” Hassan stressed that “The VPI for residential units held steady at 96.6 points, unchanged from the previous quarter." “This index is benchmarked against a base of 100 points set in Q1 2021. The apartment index was recorded at 97.3 points, while the villa index stood at 96.4 points. Valuation prices in both categories showed no variation on a quarterly basis,” she added. Alternatively, the rates for Sale in The Pearl Island amounted to QR10,390 per sq m, a decline of 1% per annum. Values in Lusail reached QR10,130 per sq m, maintaining steady annual performance, while other key areas including West Bay Lagoons reported a decline by 3% Y-O-Y, with values at QR9,530 per sq m. On the other hand, the villa market plunged by 1.1% on an annual basis but was

constant throughout the quarter, amounting to QR5,513 per sq m. Villa rates over most locations were stable compared to last quarter except for Al Thumama and Old Airport areas where prices saw a drop by 1.2% and 3.5%, respectively. ValuStrat stated "The price-to-rent ratio was 20 years, and the gross yield for residential units was stable at 5.9%. Apartments recorded 8.1% while villas registered for 4.8%. (Peninsula Qatar)

- **Qatar median monthly rent for shopping centers declines in second quarter -** Median monthly rent for shopping centers in Qatar recorded a decline of 2% quarter-on-quarter and 5% in the second quarter (Q2) of 2024 compared to the same period last year, researcher ValuStrat has said in a report. Retail outlets across Qatar experienced increased footfall as they participated in festivities leading up to Eid, ValuStrat noted. Inside Doha, the monthly median asking rent for street retail declined to QR125 per sq m, reducing by 5% compared to last quarter and 18% year-on-year. For street retail outside Doha Municipality, the median monthly rent remained unchanged on a quarterly basis at QR145 per sq m, while increasing by 2% annually. The second quarter recorded in the region of 1,500 commercial lease contracts, declining by 9.3% year-on-year. Al Wukair, Al Mashaf, and Al Thumama saw the highest concentration of rental activity with 189 contracts during the quarter, ValuStrat said quoting the Ministry of Municipality & Environment. Retail stock remained unchanged at 2.5mn sq m gross leasable area (GLA) as there was no major addition during the quarter. Public transport company Mowasalat (Karwa) has launched its second kiosk in Doha Festival City and plans to establish two new booths in City Centre Doha and LuLu Hypermarket on D Ring Road in Doha. In terms of "industrial performance" in Qatar's real estate market, ValuStrat said the maritime sector achieved a 51% yearly growth in container handling through Hamad, Doha, and Ruwais ports during June 2024. Total port calls reached some 242 vessels and 144,000 containers. The monthly median asking rent for dry warehouses dropped by 2% quarter-on-quarter, and 6.3% yearly, reaching QR37 per sq m. Alternatively, the monthly median asking rent for temperature-controlled warehouses increased by 3.1% quarterly but declined by 7.4% compared to last year, arriving at QR43 per sq m. In the Industrial Area, rents for climate-controlled storage facilities increased by 3.7% quarter-on-quarter, while rates for ambient warehouses experienced a 2% decline over the same period, ValuStrat noted. The Industrial Production Index (IPI) (base year 2018=100) reached 96.1 points, a decline of 7% compared to last quarter and 7.5% year-on-year as per the National Planning Council. (Gulf Times)
- **Logistics sector rapidly expanding, poised for further growth -** The logistics sector in Qatar is rapidly expanding and poised for further growth driven by significant investments in infrastructure. Qatar has been actively investing in developing its logistics sector to position itself as a global logistics hub. The country's strategic location, state-of-the-art infrastructure and efforts to diversify its economy contribute to the growth of the logistics market, noted a recent report by Invest Qatar which highlighted the recent trends in the global logistics market and explored its potential for future growth. The rapid growth of the country's logistics sector has been significantly boosted by substantial investments in technology and communication. Furthermore, this growth is further accelerated by extensive trade and investment networks Qatar is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), a member of the GCC Customs Union and a signatory of the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area (PAFTA). Qatar has established 68 bilateral investment treaties (BITs), 28 bilateral agreements on customs cooperation and 80+ double taxation agreements with major economies to ease trade and investment activities. As a result, the logistics sector has emerged as one of Qatar's fastest-growing industries, experiencing a remarkable growth rate of 26% in 2022. Building on years of investment and strategic planning, the country's excellent logistics and supply chain networks serve as a reference case for how to enhance and navigate global supply chain and logistics disruptions. The country has established itself as a global leader in logistics and supply chain due to its strategic location situated at the crossroads of Asia, Europe and Africa—world-class infrastructure and advanced facilities. Qatar's free zones and logistics parks, along with advancements in ICT, contribute to a robust and efficient logistics and supply chain network, making it a vital hub connecting major global markets, the report further said. The logistics sector serves as the foundation of global trade and is poised for continuous growth. The logistics market encompasses various transportation modes, such as airways, waterways, railways and roadways. Additionally, it includes a spectrum of logistics services, comprising inbound and outbound transportation management, warehousing and various auxiliary support services. The expansion of the e-commerce sector has been a significant driver in propelling the growth of the logistics sector, with e-commerce in the GCC achieving a value of $23.8bn in 2022.The logistics market in the GCC is anticipated to demonstrate sustained growth with Qatar, KSA and the UAE leading the way. The GCC region continues to invest in various projects such as airports, seaports, railways, roads, energy infrastructure (including renewables) and ICT. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **MoPH gearing up to launch 3rd National Health Strategy -** The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) said that the 2nd National Health Strategy 2018-2022 has successfully accomplished over 90% of its outcomes and played a crucial role in the ongoing sustainable development and improvement of healthcare in Qatar, aiming to enhance the health of the Qatari community. The announcement comes as the MoPH is gearing up to launch the 3rd National Health Strategy 2024-2030. Director of the Strategic Planning, Performance and Innovation Department at the Ministry of Public Health, Huda al-Khtheeri said: "The strategy has successfully accomplished over 90% of its outcomes across 54 projects, focusing on prevention, wellness, improving access to care, and delivering services in a more integrated manner." "These accomplishments were achieved despite the strategy's implementation period coinciding with the global health challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which Qatar successfully managed the crisis and maintained one of the lowest mortality rates globally. Furthermore, throughout the strategy's implementation, significant attention was given to ensuring the successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, which was recognized as the healthiest tournament ever, thanks to the tremendous efforts of all partners involved," she added. Through the National Health Strategy 2018-2022, the Ministry of Public Health prioritized the improvement and development of services for seven population groups most in need of care, achieving significant milestones in this area, including a 5% reduction in the prevalence of dental caries among children and a 10% increase in the rate of exclusive breastfeeding for infants during the first six months of life. Additionally, the percentage of patients receiving mental health services in primary and community care settings increased by about 17%, and the incidence of emergency department visits due to falls among individuals aged 60 years and older decreased from 2.4% in 2018 to 1.9% in 2021. The strategy also led to a 25% increase in the number of organizations with access to occupational health and wellness programs in the workplace. Furthermore, improvements were made in midwifery services for women, as well as services aimed at empowering patients with multiple chronic conditions. In the field of health system priorities, as a result of joint efforts across all sectors, Qatar became the first country in the world to have all its municipalities awarded the title of "Healthy City" by the World Health Organization. Additionally, Qatar University received the title of "Healthy University," and Qatar Foundation's Education City achieved the title of "Healthy Education City" from the World Health Organization. The Ministry of Public Health has also achieved an increase in its International Health Regulations (IHR) indicators score, rising from 35% in 2018 to 97% in 2022. The goal of the IHR is to prevent disease outbreaks. Qatar has made significant progress in the Universal Health Coverage index, increasing its score from 72 in 2017 to 76 in 2021. Additionally, the National Framework for Health Education was developed and launched to ensure consistent messaging across all programs and campaigns in the coming years. Through the vision of the Second National Health Strategy 2018-2022, "Our Health, Our Future," the strategy focused on providing timely care, delivered by the right person, in the most appropriate setting. This approach has laid the strong foundations for the next phase of development and improvement through the forthcoming Third National Health Strategy 2024-2030, which is set to be launched soon as part of Qatar's Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030 and Qatar National Vision 2030. (Gulf Times)
- **Visit Qatar announces new organizational structure -** Visit Qatar, the main marketing and promotional arm of Qatar Tourism, has announced a

new organizational structure that aligns with the National Development Strategy 2024-2030 and Tourism Strategy 2030. This realignment is designed to strengthen Visit Qatar's mission of increasing international visitor demand by cultivating Qatar's diverse touristic offering. The new organizational structure introduces key roles aimed at bolstering Visit Qatar's capacity to develop new thrilling attractions and diversify the country's events calendar. Among the new appointments are specialists in digital products, festivals and events, financial management, and strategic project planning. "As we continue to attract outstanding talent in line with the National Tourism Strategy 2030, Visit Qatar is pleased to unveil a new organizational structure that will empower us to further our mission of showcasing Qatar's rich tourism offering and enhancing our global presence," said Visit Qatar chief executive Abdulaziz Ali al-Mawlawi. "With our new team members on board, we are well-positioned to drive innovation, manage large-scale events, and deliver exceptional experiences that will attract visitors from around the world." Through its extensive network of international offices, digital platforms and marketing campaigns, Visit Qatar is significantly broadening the country's global reach. As part of its strategic vision, Visit Qatar is dedicated to diversifying the nation's offerings by organizing a wide array of unique experiences, festivals, and events designed to captivate and attract visitors from around the world, while ensuring an exceptional and memorable experience for all in Qatar. (Gulf Times)

## *International*

- **Lowest euro zone inflation in 3 years sets up ECB for cut -** Inflation in the euro zone fell to its lowest level in three years in August, setting the stage for a further cut in the European Central Bank's interest rates next month despite an Olympics-driven surge in the price of services. The ECB has started winding down a two-year campaign against high inflation that followed the brisk reopening of the economy after the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Inflation in the euro zone fell to its lowest level in three years in August, setting the stage for a further cut in the European Central Bank's interest rates next month despite an Olympics-driven surge in the price of services. The ECB has started winding down a two-year campaign against high inflation that followed the brisk reopening of the economy after the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "The significant drop in headline inflation in August makes the September cut a foregone conclusion," said Tomas Dvorak, a senior economist at Oxford Economics. Even ECB board member and prominent policy 'hawk' Isabel Schnabel appeared to open the door to more easing on Friday, saying further gradual rate cuts might not derail the disinflation process as some policymakers had feared. Still, the report showed price growth in the services sector - which is closely watched by policymakers because it better reflects domestic demand rather than external conditions - accelerated to 4.2% from an already high 4.0%."The significant drop in headline inflation in August makes the September cut a foregone conclusion," said Tomas Dvorak, a senior economist at Oxford Economics. Even ECB board member and prominent policy 'hawk' Isabel Schnabel appeared to open the door to more easing on Friday, saying further gradual rate cuts might not derail the disinflation process as some policymakers had feared. Still, the report showed price growth in the services sector - which is closely watched by policymakers because it better reflects domestic demand rather than external conditions - accelerated to 4.2% from an already high 4.0%. This is partly because market economists see a bigger dip than the ECB's own staff in inflation this autumn. Policymakers say they will not be confident in the inflation outlook until wage growth slows, with Germany's central bank especially vocal about this risk. Still, with inflation now within a whisker of the ECB's target, the euro zone's central bankers were likely to broaden their debate from the single-minded focus on inflation to take into account signs of economic weakness. Wage growth has slowed sharply and unemployment is already rising in around a quarter of the euro zone's 20 countries. Survey data among firms and households suggest there is further labor market deterioration in store. Lending has dwindled to a trickle since the ECB jacked up rates last year, causing investment to dry up and hampering sectors that rely on it, such as construction and manufacturing. This has left euro zone economic growth barely humming along for over a year, with weakness in industrial powerhouse Germany only partly offset by strength in services-oriented countries such as Spain. "We think the ECB is already behind the curve, fixated too much on current and narrow measures of inflation while not paying enough attention to weak growth, with potential long-term damaging impacts," Oxford Economics' Dvorak said. (Reuters)

- **China's weak factory PMI raises pressure for consumer stimulus -** China's manufacturing activity sank to a six-month low in August as factory gate prices tumbled and owners struggled for orders, an official survey showed on Saturday, pressuring policymakers to press on with plans to direct more stimulus to households. The National Bureau of Statistics purchasing managers' index slipped to 49.1 from 49.4 in July, its sixth straight decline and fourth month below the 50 mark separating growth from contraction. It missed the median forecast of 49.5 in a Reuters poll. After a dismal second quarter, the world's second-largest economy lost momentum further in July, prompting policymakers to signal they were ready to deviate from their playbook of pouring funds into infrastructure projects, instead targeting fresh stimulus at households. Sentiment remains gloomy among manufacturers as a years-long property crisis keeps domestic demand in the doldrums and Western curbs loom on Chinese exports such as electric vehicles. Producers reported factory gate prices were their worst in 14 months, plunging to 42 from 46.3 in July, while the new orders and new export orders sub-indices remained firmly in negative territory and manufacturers maintained a hiring halt. "The fiscal policy stance remains quite restrictive, which may have contributed to the weak economic momentum," said Zhiwei Zhang, chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management. "To achieve economic stabilization, the fiscal policy stance needs to become much more supportive. With the U.S. economy slowing, exports may not be as reliable a source for growth as it was in the first half of the year," he added. Policy advisers are pondering whether Beijing may decide in October to bring forward part of next year's bond issuance quota if growth does not show signs of bottoming out in the summer. China made a similar move at the same time last year with stimulus that raised the deficit to 3.8% of GDP from 3.0% and frontloaded part of the 2024 local government debt quotas to invest in flood prevention and other infrastructure. This time, however, analysts anticipate the authorities will seek to put a floor under depressed domestic demand. (Reuters)

## *Regional*

- **GCC-listed companies earn $60.7bn during Q2, reports Kamco Invest -** Aggregate net profits reported by companies listed on GCC exchanges witnessed a healthy year on year (YoY) growth of 5.7% during Q2-2024 led by a broad-based growth across most markets in the region. Kamco Investment Company, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse headquartered in Kuwait, in its latest report, stated that the quarter on quarter (QoQ) growth came in at 8.1% with total net profits up for the second consecutive quarter to reach $60.7bn during Q2-2024 as compared to $56.2bn in Q1-2024 and $57.4bn in Q2-2023. At the regional level, Dubai reported the second-biggest YoY growth in profits (after Bahrain) at 30.9% reaching $6.7bn during Q2-2024 mainly related to accounting adjustments and restructuring implemented by DSI. According to the report, companies in Bahrain also reported double-digit YoY growth in profits during the quarter followed by low to mid-single digit profit growth for the rest of the GCC countries. The growth in profits also highlighted a broad-based double-digit increase in profits for most sectors in the GCC. Key sectors like Banks and Telecom posted profit growth of 10.8% and 15.8%, respectively, while Materials and Real Estate sectors showed even stronger growth of 45.6% and 23.9%, respectively. The 68.3% profit growth for the Capital Goods sector reflected the accounting adjustments related to DSI. In terms of 1H-2024 performance, net profits for GCC listed corporates was almost flat with a marginal increase of 0.1% to reach $116.9bn as compared to $116.8bn during 1H-2023. The flattish growth reflected mixed trend at the country level with Saudi and Abu Dhabi listed entities reporting a decline in net profits by 2.7% and 2.2%, respectively, which was completely offset by higher total profits for the rest of the country aggregates. The report concluded that the aggregate for Dubai once again showed the biggest YoY growth of 20.0% during 1H-2024. (Zawya)

- **Turkey hosts Gulf nations in $20bn bid for new trade route** - Turkey is hosting transport ministers from Iraq, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in Istanbul on Thursday to discuss building an estimated $20 billion trade route connecting the Persian Gulf to Europe. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is seeking financing from the UAE and Qatar to build a rail and road network from Iraq's Faw port on the Persian Gulf to its northern border with Turkey and a railway across Istanbul's Bosphorus Strait bridging Europe and Asia. (Bloomberg)

- **Saudi Arabia, Maldives sign deal on seaplanes, airstrips -** Minister of Transport and Logistic and Chairman of the Board of Directors of General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) Eng. Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser signed MoU in the fields of seaplanes and airstrips between the governments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Maldives. The MoU was signed by the Maldives Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Mohamed Ameen, in the presence of GACA President Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Al-Duailej, on the sidelines of a visit by a delegation from the Maldives to the Red Sea Destination. The MoU aims to enhance cooperation in the field of seaplanes and airstrips to provide a safe air transport environment in accordance with international best practices. It also aims to implement regulations aimed at ensuring the safety and security of seaplane operations and their development. The Red Sea Destination is being developed responsibly for people and nature by Red Sea Global (RSG), which is dedicated to creating world-class sustainable tourism destinations in Saudi Arabia. RSG owns the first seaplane company in the kingdom, Fly Red Sea, headquartered at the Red Sea International Airport, which connects visitors to the stunning resorts located on the various islands of the destination through a variety of options, including seaplanes. The Red Sea International Airport has become a major gateway for luxury tourism, contributing to enhancing Saudi Arabia's global leadership in innovation and sustainable development. The airport operates entirely on renewable energy and has runway for seaplanes and a private passenger lounge. (Zawya)

- **NCVC opens seasonal investment opportunities in Riyadh's national parks -** The National Center for Vegetation Cover and Combating Desertification (NCVC) has begun accepting applications for seasonal investments in national parks within the Riyadh region, targeting both public and private-sector investors to enhance environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Investment opportunities are available in Thadiq National Park, Saad National Park, Al-Ghat, Jabala, and Aba Samri Park. The projects include activities such as camping, caravans, restaurants and cafes, temporary sports clubs, and paragliding. The NCVC invites individuals, institutions, and government entities to submit applications electronically, providing details such as the applicant's name, contact number, institution name, type of activity, and the desired park for the investment. (Zawya)

- **Enhancing economic partnership: New phase for Saudi non-oil exports in Indian markets -** Economic relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of India continue to grow, with India being Saudi Arabia's second-largest trading partner and Saudi Arabia ranking fourth among India's largest trading partners. This notable growth in economic cooperation underscores the strong and historic ties between the two countries. During his official visit to India in February 2019, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister emphasized the historic relations between the Kingdom and India. This visit marked the beginning of a new era of strategic partnership between the two nations, leading to the establishment of the Saudi-Indian Strategic Partnership Council, co-chaired by HRH the Crown Prince and the Indian prime minister, with broad ministerial representation covering all areas of cooperation. Within the framework of these strong relations, the Saudi Export Development Authority (Saudi Exports) has taken effective steps to enhance the presence of Saudi products and services in the Indian market, focusing on aspects that contribute to strengthening economic cooperation and developing non-oil exports. The authority is keen on participating in specialized international exhibitions to support Saudi exporters in showcasing their products and services to interested parties and visitors, as well as signing trade deals that expand their export scope. For example, Saudi Exports is participating under the "Made in Saudi" identity at the Anuga India 2024 exhibition, being held in Mumbai between August 28 and 30, with a pavilion featuring 25 leading national companies in the food products sector. This reflects Saudi Exports' commitment to expanding the export scope of Saudi products and enhancing their presence in global markets, in line with Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to diversify income sources and develop non-oil exports. This participation also highlights the importance of the food products sector as one of the promising sectors contributing to the increase in non-oil exports. The value of exports from this sector exceeded SAR 19bn in 2023. High-quality Saudi dates are exported to more than 119 countries, and the Kingdom's production capacity of white Vannamei shrimp has exceeded 20,000 tons, making the Kingdom one of the main global exporters of this product. The quality and diversity of Saudi food products are evident through this outstanding performance in global markets. Saudi Exports aims to enhance exporters' readiness by providing them with specialized information and studies, helping them find suitable export opportunities. It also focuses on developing exporters' capabilities through organizing various workshops and training courses. The authority recently held a workshop titled "Empowering Exports to India and Bangladesh," aimed at exploring ways to enhance the access of Saudi products into Indian markets, reflecting its commitment to boosting trade opportunities for Saudi products. Saudi Exports also attaches great importance to empowering exporters and addressing the challenges they face, such as customs and non-customs issues, and financial and logistical challenges, by collaborating with relevant authorities to find practical solutions that enhance companies' capabilities to successfully enter Indian markets. The efforts of Saudi Exports affirm the Kingdom's commitment to enhancing trade exchange with India, as both countries are strategic partners working together to expand shared economic opportunities. According to recent reports, the value of Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports to India exceeded SAR 23bn in 2023. In June 2024, the value of Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports to India reached approximately SAR 1.7bn, with chemical industry products accounting for the largest share at SAR 704.2mn, followed by plastics, rubber, and their products at SAR 382.9mn, and pearls, precious or semi-precious stones at SAR 313mn. Over the past five years (2019-2023), Saudi non-oil exports to India totaled around SAR 100bn, reflecting the strength and competitiveness of Saudi products in Indian markets. (Zawya)

- **SIF 2024 delves into future of smart economies -** Over 80 ministers, government officials, business leaders, and investors from around the world will gather to explore the latest economic trends, the transformative role of AI in smart economies, and the strategies needed to drive sustainable development and growth across industries during the 7th edition of the Sharjah Investment Forum (SIF 2024). Organized by the Sharjah FDI Office (Invest in Sharjah) under the theme "A Futuristic Vision for Smart Economies", the event will take place from 18-19 September at the Al Jawaher Reception and Convention Centre. These prominent speakers will lead a series of high-level discussions, keynote speeches, and workshops to deliberate on critical issues such as the future of manufacturing, advancements in agriculture, innovations in logistics, and the role of AI in enhancing food security and supply chain management. Leading figures in the UAE's economic sphere will take center stage at SIF 2024, including Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy; and Khalifa Musbah Al Tunaiji, Chairman of the Sharjah Department of Agriculture and Livestock. The forum will also welcome H.E. Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, CEO of the Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq); and H.E. Mohamed Juma Al Musharrkh, CEO of Invest in Sharjah. A lineup of influential CEOs from leading UAE-based companies will also be featured at SIF 2024. Among these are Khaled Al Huraimel, Group CEO and Vice Chairman of BEEAH Group; Ahmed Mohamed Al Naqbi, CEO of Emirates Development Bank; Hussain Al Mahmoudi, CEO of the Sharjah Research, Technology and Innovation Park; Sara Bilhaif Al Nuaimi, CEO of Sheraa; and Mohamed Khadiri, CEO of Bank of Sharjah Joining them will be Ahmad Al Darwish, CEO of Falcon Robotics; Hamed Al Hamed, CEO of Gracia Group; Mohammad AbuSheikh, Founder and CEO of LocAI Ltd.; Talal Tabbaa, CEO of CoinMENA; Kareem Ayyad, CEO of Uktob.ai; Khaled Shaikh, Founder & CEO of Prognica Labs; Muhammad Gawish, Co-Founder & CEO of iSchool; Bader Al Essa, CEO & Founder of EMCAN and Ahmad Hammoud, UAE General Manager of Alesca Technologies. Reflecting its commitment to diversity, the two-day international event will welcome a distinguished array of experts and business leaders from around the world. Among them are Morgan Eldred, Founder of Digital Energy, Liesl

Yearsley, CEO of Akiin AI, and Bobby Stattelman, CEO of UAE-based Falcons.AI. Additional participants include; Rajesh Garg, Group Chief Financial Officer & Lead on Sustainability at Landmark Retail; and Kris Fade, radio host and entrepreneur. Participants will have the opportunity to gain valuable insights from entrepreneurs and business leaders with diverse backgrounds, such as Jigar Sagar, Founder of Triliv Holdings, and Dariush Soudi, Founder of ARENA Capital. The forum will also present perspectives from Reg Athwal, Founder and CEO of Verchool Holdings; and Briar Prestidge, Founder and CEO of Prestidge Group. Marwan Saleh Alichla, Coordinator General of the SIF Committee, emphasized the forum's commitment to showcasing top local and international expertise in investment and development. He stated, “SIF 2024 provides a unique platform for investors, business leaders, and entrepreneurs to explore the latest trends and exchange knowledge. This year's agenda tackles the most pressing global challenges and opportunities, with a focus on key topics of mutual interest to decision-makers and business leaders across various economies.” (Zawya)

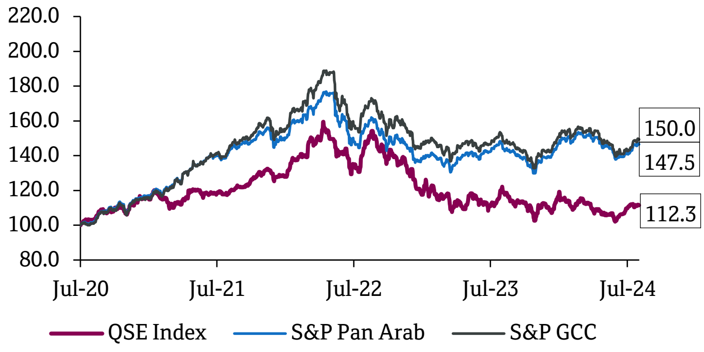
- **Smart Zone helps boosts UAE’s startup ecosystem -** With over 1,200 new small and medium sized companies registered in the first half of 2024, Smart Zone has established itself as the experts in business setup in the UAE’s booming entrepreneurial scene. Since its inception, the company has helped establish over 30,000 companies in the UAE with Residency Visas, Bank Account Opening, Tax & Accounting, and many more services empowering startups and SMEs in the region. With a vision to further boost the startup ecosystem in the UAE, the company aims to service 10,000+ new businesses by the end of 2025. With a 96% client retention rate and over 1,200 new businesses launched with Smart Zone's expert guidance, the company is a key driver of economic growth in the UAE. Smart Zone is playing a pivotal role in driving economic growth across some of the nation’s most crucial sectors essential to the UAE's economic diversification and GDP growth, such as e-commerce, general trading, real estate, and FMCG. Contributing to the economy As the UAE continues to diversify its economy, companies like Smart Zone are at the forefront, making it easier for businesses to establish operations and contribute to the country's rapidly evolving economic landscape. During the first half of 2024, Smart Zone has facilitated 5,000+ Corporate Tax registrations and set up over 800 bank accounts for their clients in the UAE, contributing immensely to the startup ecosystem in UAE. Smart Zone will also invest over AED500,000 ($136,133) in 2024 to upgrade services empowering start-ups and enhancing customer experience for its clientele. "The UAE is buzzing with entrepreneurial energy, sparking a thrilling wave of innovation that’s transforming our economy. As bold new ventures take root, they’re not just driving growth—they’re shaping the future of a vibrant, dynamic UAE. It’s an exciting time to be part of this unstoppable momentum, where every new business is a building block in our nation’s extraordinary success story,” said Varoon Sinha, Founder, Smart Zone. Sinha added: “The UAE's real estate market is soaring to new heights accounting for 5.5% of the GDP, fueling a dynamic wave of growth that’s reshaping our nation’s skyline and economy. With visionary entrepreneurs stepping up, we’re not just witnessing a boom—we’re architecting the future. This momentum is a powerful catalyst for the UAE’s prosperity, driving both stability and innovation across the entire economy.” (Zawya)
- **Bahrain: FMCG-retail sectors drive economic transformation -** As Bahrain continues its economic transformation, the retail and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sectors are emerging as pivotal drivers. According to Information and eGovernment Authority (iGA) data, the ‘Accommodation and Food Service’ activities are one of the largest non-oil sectors, demonstrating a robust 10.7% growth rate. This convergence of industries reflects the nation’s broader strategy to enhance consumer experiences, support local businesses, and adapt to evolving market dynamics. Bahrain’s retail sector is experiencing a resurgence, fueled by rising consumer spending and increased tourism. A stable inflation rate has further contributed to this upturn, with strong performances in food and beverages, electronics, and personal care products. Consumers are increasingly favoring premium products, particularly in health, wellness, and technology sectors, indicative of a shift towards more value-driven purchases. In parallel, Bahrain’s FMCG sector is adapting to changing consumer preferences. A notable increase in demand for healthier food options and premium beverages reflects a more health-conscious population. The convenience food market is also expanding, catering to the fast-paced lifestyle of modern consumers. While hypermarkets and supermarkets remain dominant, online sales have seen a significant uptick, mirroring the global trend towards e-commerce. Grant Thornton managing partner Jassim Abdulaal emphasizes the positive outlook: “The FMCG sector in Bahrain is navigating a period of transformative growth. As consumer preferences evolve towards premium and health-conscious products, businesses have a unique opportunity to innovate and lead in this dynamic market.” Despite the positive growth trajectory, both sectors face significant challenges. High operating costs, intense competition from neighboring countries, and the pressure to continuously innovate are key hurdles. Sunil Thakkar, an industry expert in FMCG, notes, “Bahrain’s FMCG sector is facing the challenge of balancing rapid innovation with cost efficiency.” Senior partner Jatin Karia echoes this sentiment, stating that “the challenge lies in not just meeting consumer expectations but anticipating them.” However, these challenges also present opportunities for innovation. The rise of e-commerce and growing consumer demand for sustainability are pushing retailers to adopt new business models and product offerings. In the FMCG sector, there’s significant growth potential in segments like organic foods, ready-to-eat meals, and premium beverages. This industry plays a vital role in Bahrain’s economy, driving job creation and economic activity. The future of the FMCG sector in Bahrain looks particularly promising. As consumers become more health-conscious and demand for premium products increases, businesses have a significant opportunity to introduce innovative, high-quality offerings that align with these evolving preferences. Bahrain’s strategic location as a gateway to the GCC further enhances its appeal as a hub for FMCG companies seeking regional expansion. “At Grant Thornton, we are uniquely positioned to support businesses in navigating the complexities of Bahrain’s rapidly evolving retail and FMCG sector,” concluded Mr Karia. (Zawya)
- **Muscat up 8 places in Smart City Index -** Muscat is ranked 88th out of 142 cities in the 2024 Smart City Index (SCI), reflecting a significant improvement from its 96th position last year. The index, developed by International Institute for Management Development, assesses residents’ perceptions of the infrastructure and technology applications in their cities. Muscat residents identified unemployment, affordable housing and public transport as the top priority areas needing attention. Additionally, better basic amenities, health services and security measures were highlighted as essential improvements. A significant majority of residents expressed a willingness to share personal data to improve traffic congestion and showed high trust in online information from authorities. The prevalent use of online transactions reflected growing digital integration in the city. Among cities in the GCC countries, Abu Dhabi is ranked highest at tenth, followed by Dubai (12th), Riyadh (25th), Doha (48th), Mecca (52nd), Jeddah (55th) and Medina (74th). The SCI evaluates cities based on two main criteria: Structures and Technology, each further assessed across five areas – health and safety, mobility, activities, opportunities, and governance. Muscat scored well in health and safety, with notable performance in basic sanitation, recycling services and public safety. Residents reported satisfaction with medical services and the effectiveness of air pollution controls. Technologically, the city’s online maintenance reporting, public Wi-Fi and CCTV systems received positive feedback, reflecting robust infrastructure in maintaining health and safety standards. Mobility in Muscat demonstrated a need for improvement, with average scores highlighting issues with traffic congestion. Public transport was rated as satisfactory. Technological initiatives such as car-sharing apps and online parking space information needs improvement, with further advancements needed to significantly improve mobility. Availability of green spaces and cultural activities scored well, showing that Muscat provides satisfactory recreational options for its residents. The ability to purchase tickets for shows and museums online has made cultural activities more accessible, indicating good use of technology in enhancing resident experiences. Opportunities for work and education showed mixed results. While employment finding services and local learning opportunities were rated as satisfactory, there is room for improvement. The availability of online resources and IT skills training were areas where residents felt enhancements could be made. Despite this, the current Internet speed and reliability were appreciated,

scoring above average. Governance in Muscat received moderate scores. While business transparency and ease of public access to city finances were rated positively, there is potential for greater public participation. Online voting and public engagement platforms were noted, though the overall effectiveness of these initiatives needs improvement. (Zawya)

- **As Oman's fiscal performance improves, Moody's upgrades ratings, outlook -** Ongoing improvements in Oman's fiscal performance, supportive oil prices and prudent fiscal management, have led Moody's Ratings to change its outlook to positive from stable and affirm its Ba1 long-term issuer and long-term senior unsecured ratings. The ratings agency has also affirmed the Government of Oman's (P)Ba1 senior unsecured medium-term note program rating. "A declining debt burden, in particular the foreign-currency portion of debt, increases the government's capacity to absorb shocks, such as those caused by cyclical fluctuations in the global energy markets or increases in global interest rates," said Moody's. The Oman government managed to reduce its debt by nearly 27% in nominal terms during 2022-2023 and a further 5.6% during the first seven months of 2024, reaching around 34% of the projected full-year GDP in July 2024. Moody's notes this was achieved without drawing down its stock of financial assets. The level of assets in the Petroleum Reserve Fund, which is the main internal source that supports government debt service payments, increased to $3.2bn by mid-August 2024 from $2.7bn at the end of 2023 and $1.9bn at the end of 2022. Further debt repayments during 2024 were supported by a fiscal surplus, which reached around 1% of the projected full year GDP in the first half of 2024. Alongside, the government has managed to curb spending. Overall government expenditure in H1 2024 increased by only 2% compared to the same period of last year, "well below nominal GDP growth and in line with the approved budget, demonstrating an improving track record of fiscal policy effectiveness". The affirmation of the Ba1 ratings is supported by Oman's high per-capita income, the government's moderate debt burden and its improving track record of fiscal policy effectiveness. However, the ratings is constrained by Oman's heavy economic and fiscal dependence on the oil and gas sector, as hydrocarbon revenue constitutes a dominant share of total government revenue and is equivalent to a large share of GDP. In contrast to its regional peers, Oman's attempts at diversifying to non-hydrocarbon revenue has lagged. "We therefore expect that reducing the sovereign's dependence on the hydrocarbon sector will likely materialize over an extended period of time, constraining the potential for significant upward rating migration in the medium term." (Zawya)

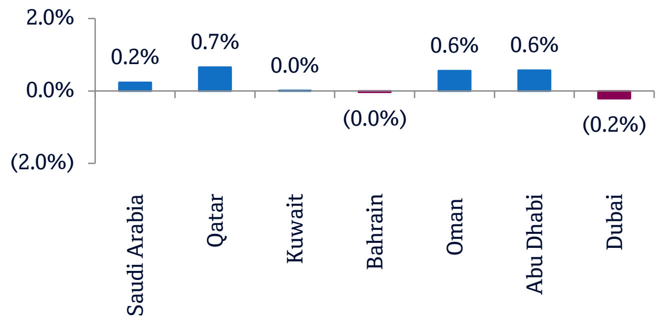
- **Kuwait's oil and gas financing surges 17.6% in June, despite annual decline -** In June, local banks' financing for the oil and gas sector in Kuwait saw a substantial increase of 88.2mn dinars, or 17.6%, bringing the total to 88.7mn dinars. This rise marked a significant improvement from the 500,000 dinars recorded in May. However, on an annual basis, financing for the sector decreased by 7.8mn dinars, or 8%, compared to June 2023, when it was 96.5mn dinars. Over the first six months of 2024, total financing for the sector amounted to approximately 760.8mn dinars. For both residents and non-residents, the total balance of local banks' financing for the oil and gas sector decreased by about 100mn dinars in June, reaching 2.334bn dinars. This was down from 2.434bn dinars in June 2023. The annual decline was even more pronounced, with the balance falling by 292mn dinars from 2.626bn dinars in June 2023. Throughout 2023, oil and gas sector financing displayed considerable variability. It started at 78.8mn dinars in January, surged to 243.3mn dinars in February then dropped sharply to 61.2mn dinars before rising again to 159.2mn dinars in April. The month of May saw a significant increase to 252.8mn dinars, followed by a decrease to 96.5mn dinars in June. Subsequent months continued to show fluctuations -- July saw a rise to 80mn dinars, August peaked at 293mn dinars, September dropped to 6.2mn dinars, October climbed to 125.1mn dinars, November reached 269.7mn dinars, and December ended at 89.3mn dinars. In the broader context of monthly credit facilities provided by banks across all sectors, there was a 3% increase in the first half of 2024, totaling 12.067bn dinars, up from 11.708bn dinars in the same period of 2023. The credit facilities increased to 167.2mn dinars or 8.6% from May to June, reaching 2.099bn dinars. However, this was an 11% decrease on an annual basis, down from 2.171bn dinars in June 2023. Personal facilities experienced a notable increase of 22% over the first six months of 2024, rising from 1.789bn dinars to 2.185bn dinars. Nonetheless, there was a 20.8% monthly decline in June, with personal facilities dropping from 443.7mn dinars in May to 351.1mn dinars. In recent developments, the balances of cash credit facilities (loans) with local banks increased by 4.2% from 53.557bn dinars at the end of December to 55.8bn dinars by the end of June. This rise also represents a monthly increase of 0.9%, amounting to about 510.7mn dinars from 55.297bn dinars at the end of May. On an annual basis, this figure is up by 5.3% from 52.983bn dinars recorded in June 2023. Deposits in local banks also saw an increase during this period. They grew by 1.16% or 569.2mn dinars, rising from 48.727bn dinars in December 2023 to 49.29bn dinars in June. Annually, deposits increased by 3%, or 1.457bn dinars, from 47.839bn dinars in June 2023. In the oil market, prices continued to climb due to concerns over potential disruptions in regional oil supplies amid escalating tensions in the Middle East. Additionally, expectations of US interest rate cuts have positively impacted global economic prospects and fuel demand. Brent crude futures rose to $80.02 per barrel, while US crude increased by $1 to $75.83 per barrel. Earlier in the day, Brent crude futures were up 37 cents, or 0.5%, reaching $79.39 per barrel, and US crude futures rose 36 cents, or 0.5%, to $75.19 per barrel. Market analysts are anticipating further price increases. Tony Sycamore from IG noted that Israel's preemptive strike on Lebanon could lead to higher oil prices, with WTI potentially extending its recovery to $77.50 per barrel. (Zawya)

## Rebased Performance




*Source: Bloomberg*

## Daily Index Performance




*Source: Bloomberg*

| Asset/Currency Performance | Close ($) | 1D% | WTD% | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gold/Ounce | 2,503.39 | (0.7) | (0.4) | 21.3 |
| Silver/Ounce | 28.86 | (1.9) | (3.2) | 21.3 |
| Crude Oil (Brent)/Barrel (FM Future) | 78.80 | (1.4) | (0.3) | 2.3 |
| Crude Oil (WTI)/Barrel (FM Future) | 73.55 | (3.1) | (1.7) | 2.7 |
| Natural Gas (Henry Hub)/MMBtu | 1.87 | 0.0 | (0.6) | (27.6) |
| LPG Propane (Arab Gulf)/Ton | 76.00 | (1.4) | (3.2) | 8.6 |
| LPG Butane (Arab Gulf)/Ton | 80.50 | (2.4) | 0.0 | (19.9) |
| Euro | 1.10 | (0.3) | (1.3) | 0.1 |
| Yen | 146.17 | 0.8 | 1.2 | 3.6 |
| GBP | 1.31 | (0.3) | (0.7) | 3.1 |
| CHF | 1.18 | (0.3) | (0.2) | (1.0) |
| AUD | 0.68 | (0.5) | (0.4) | (0.7) |
| USD Index | 101.70 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.4 |
| RUB | 110.69 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 58.9 |
| BRL | 0.19 | 0.8 | 0.8 | (10.0) |

*Source: Bloomberg*

| Global Indices Performance | Close | 1D%* | WTD%* | YTD%* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MSCI World Index | 3,661.24 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 15.5 |
| DJ Industrial | 41,563.08 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 10.3 |
| S&P 500 | 5,648.40 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 18.4 |
| NASDAQ 100 | 17,713.63 | 1.1 | (0.9) | 18.0 |
| STOXX 600 | 525.05 | (0.2) | 0.2 | 9.5 |
| DAX | 18,906.92 | (0.3) | 0.3 | 12.7 |
| FTSE 100 | 8,376.63 | (0.5) | 0.0 | 11.3 |
| CAC 40 | 7,630.95 | (0.4) | (0.4) | 1.0 |
| Nikkei | 38,647.75 | (0.1) | (0.2) | 11.2 |
| MSCI EM | 1,099.92 | 0.5 | (0.1) | 7.4 |
| SHANGHAI SE Composite | 2,842.21 | 0.7 | 0.0 | (4.3) |
| HANG SENG | 17,989.07 | 1.1 | 2.1 | 5.7 |
| BSE SENSEX | 82,365.77 | 0.2 | 1.5 | 13.1 |
| Bovespa | 136,004.01 | (0.4) | (2.6) | (12.9) |
| RTS | 1,151.93 | (0.0) | 0.0 | 6.3 |

*Source: Bloomberg (*$ adjusted returns if any)*

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