QNB FINANCIAL SERVICES

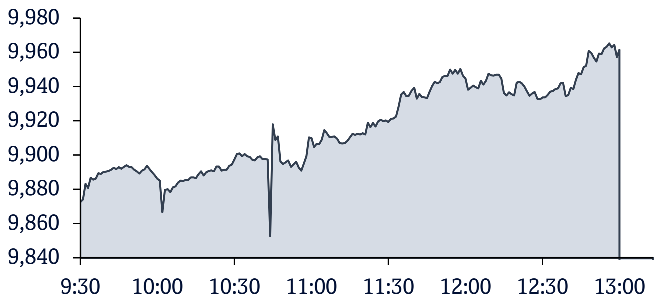
الخدمات المالية

Financial Services

Daily Market Report

Sunday, 30 June 2024

QSE Intra-Day Movement



Qatar Commentary

The QE Index rose 0.9% to close at 9,961.6. Gains were led by the Transportation and Consumer Goods & Services indices, gaining 2.1% and 1.2%, respectively. Top gainers were Qatar Gas Transport Company Ltd. and Dukhan Bank, rising 3.7% and 2.9%, respectively. Among the top losers, Qatar Cinema & Film Distribution fell 3.0%, while Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Dev. was down 2.0%.

GCC Commentary

Saudi Arabia: The TASI Index gained 0.6% to close at 11,729.6. Gains were led by the Utilities and Food & Beverages indices, rising 2.5% and 2.1%, respectively. Al Taiseer Group Talco Industrial Co. rose 10.0%, while Rasan Information Technology Co. was up 8.7%.

Dubai: The DFM Index gained 0.5% to close at 4,030.0. The Consumer Staples index rose 3.3%, while the Consumer Discretionary index gained 1.3%. Amlak Finance rose 4.4%, while Amanat Holdings was up 3.7%.

Abu Dhabi: The ADX General Index gained 0.6% to close at 9,060.7. The Consumer Staples index rose 5.6%, while the Real Estate index gained 2.4%. Abu Dhabi National Insurance Co. rose 12.4%, while Union Insurance was up 8.3%.

Kuwait: The Kuwait All Share Index gained 0.6% to close at 6,967.1. The Technology index rose 3.2%, while the Financial Services index gained 1.1%. Tamdeen Investment Co. rose 10.0%, while Gulf Franchising Holding Co. was up 9.5%.

Oman: The MSM 30 Index gained 0.3% to close at ,4687.9. Gains were led by the Services and Industrial indices, rising 1.2% and 0.3%, respectively. Sembcorp Salalah Power and Water Co. rose 7.1%, while Gulf International Chemicals was up 6.8%.

Bahrain: The BHB Index fell 0.2% to close at 2,030.7. The Communications Services index declined 0.6%, while the Materials index fell 0.3%. Bahrain Commercial Facilities Company declined 2.7%, while Zain Bahrain was down 1.6%.

Market Indicators	27 Jun 24	26 Jun 24	%Chg.
Value Traded (QR mn)	511.2	494.9	3.3
Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn)	575,025.9	570,833.9	0.7
Volume (mn)	170.1	134.7	26.2
Number of Transactions	18,831	16,549	13.8
Companies Traded	52	52	0.0
Market Breadth	32:15	26:21	–

Market Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	YTD%	TTM P/E
Total Return	22,405.57	0.9	2.7	(3.6)	11.2
All Share Index	3,481.94	0.8	2.4	(4.1)	12.0
Banks	4,116.77	0.8	3.2	(10.1)	9.9
Industrials	4,132.58	0.3	1.9	0.4	2.8
Transportation	5,572.35	2.1	2.2	30.0	26.7
Real Estate	1,532.99	0.3	(0.6)	2.1	12.6
Insurance	2,274.44	0.5	(0.3)	(13.6)	167.0
Telecoms	1,606.55	0.9	1.8	(5.8)	8.8
Consumer Goods and Services	7,455.47	1.2	1.9	(1.6)	232.4
Al Rayan Islamic Index	4,634.10	0.7	1.4	(2.7)	14.1

GCC Top Gainers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Abu Dhabi National Energy	Abu Dhabi	3.15	7.5	67,250.8	(10.0)
Savola Group	Saudi Arabia	46.75	5.2	762.6	24.8
Qatar Gas Transport Co. Ltd	Qatar	4.68	3.7	4,487.7	33.0
Abu Dhabi National Oil Company for Distribution	Abu Dhabi	3.39	3.0	14,453.6	(8.4)
Dukhan Bank	Qatar	3.78	2.9	13,382.8	(5.0)

GCC Top Losers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Emirates Central Colling Sys	Dubai	1.46	(4.6)	7,664.7	(12.0)
Ahli Bank	Oman	0.15	(3.2)	27.6	(3.8)
MBC Group	Saudi Arabia	43.15	(1.9)	333.1	0.0
Saudi Arabian Mining Co.	Saudi Arabia	43.05	(1.5)	2,693.6	(11.3)
National Shipping Co.	Saudi Arabia	25.65	(1.3)	357.7	16.3

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%
Qatar Gas Transport Company Ltd.	4.682	3.7	4,487.7	33.0
Dukhan Bank	3.777	2.9	13,382.8	(5.0)
Estithmar Holding	1.974	2.8	2,159.8	(5.8)
Qatar Fuel Company	14.890	2.5	473.5	(10.2)
The Commercial Bank	4.289	2.1	5,026.8	(30.8)

QSE Top Losers	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Qatar Cinema & Film Distribution	2.900	(3.0)	3.4	0.0
Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Dev.	0.635	(2.0)	28,847.8	(12.2)
Inma Holding	4.400	(1.9)	377.1	6.1
Ahli Bank	3.700	(1.3)	29.5	2.2
Zad Holding Company	12.480	(1.1)	178.8	(7.6)

QSE Top Volume Trades	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Dev.	0.635	(2.0)	28,847.8	(12.2)
Masraf Al Rayan	2.333	1.9	18,671.5	(12.1)
Dukhan Bank	3.777	2.9	13,382.8	(5.0)
Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding	1.646	0.2	11,713.3	(7.9)
Ezdan Holding Group	0.763	0.0	7,619.1	(11.1)

QSE Top Value Trades	Close*	1D%	Val. '000	YTD%
QNB Group	14.610	0.4	60,170.6	(11.6)
Dukhan Bank	3.777	2.9	49,681.4	(5.0)
Qatar Islamic Bank	18.600	0.6	48,071.4	(13.5)
Masraf Al Rayan	2.333	1.9	43,243.1	(12.1)
Industries Qatar	12.800	0.0	36,692.4	(2.1)

Regional Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%	Exch. Val. Traded ($ mn)	Exchange Mkt. Cap. ($ mn)	P/E**	P/B**	Dividend Yield
Qatar*	9,961.57	0.9	2.7	6.9	(8.0)	140.65	157,672.1	11.2	1.3	4.8
Dubai	4,030.00	0.5	0.5	1.3	(0.7)	193.25	184,803.6	7.9	1.2	5.9
Abu Dhabi	9,060.73	0.6	0.6	2.2	(5.4)	457.10	694,198.1	18.2	2.7	2.2
Saudi Arabia	11,729.62	0.6	2.0	2.0	(2.0)	1,764.04	2,671,632.2	20.3	2.4	3.6
Kuwait	6,967.10	0.6	(1.0)	(1.2)	2.2	130.38	147,539.0	17.9	1.6	3.3
Oman	4,687.86	0.3	0.2	(3.3)	3.8	4.65	23,827.3	12.5	0.9	5.3
Bahrain	2,030.68	(0.2)	(0.5)	(0.4)	3.0	3.29	21,317.9	8.5	0.8	8.3

*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 0.9% to close at 9,961.6. The Transportation and Consumer Goods & Services indices led the gains. The index rose on the back of buying support from Arab and Foreign shareholders despite selling pressure from Qatari and GCC shareholders.
- Qatar Gas Transport Company Ltd. and Dukhan Bank were the top gainers, rising 3.7% and 2.9%, respectively. Among the top losers, Qatar Cinema & Film Distribution fell 3.0%, while Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Dev. was down 2.0%.
- Volume of shares traded on Thursday rose by 26.2% to 170.1mn from 134.7mn on Wednesday. Further, as compared to the 30-day moving average of 164.4mn, volume for the day was 3.4% higher. Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Dev. and Masraf Al Rayan were the most active stocks, contributing 17.0% and 11.0% to the total volume, respectively.

Overall Activity	Buy%*	Sell%*	Net (QR)
Qatari Individuals	23.33%	30.71%	(37,728,562.02)
Qatari Institutions	30.66%	27.30%	17,144,578.99
Qatari	**53.98%**	**58.01%**	**(20,583,983.02)**
GCC Individuals	0.32%	0.34%	(104,752.70)
GCC Institutions	0.50%	3.71%	(16,418,465.97)
GCC	**0.82%**	**4.05%**	**(16,523,218.68)**
Arab Individuals	9.63%	9.49%	730,921.20
Arab Institutions	0.00%	0.00%	-
Arab	**9.63%**	**9.49%**	**730,921.20**
Foreigners Individuals	2.44%	2.93%	(2,481,593.94)
Foreigners Institutions	33.13%	25.53%	38,857,874.44
Foreigners	**35.57%**	**28.45%**	**36,376,280.50**

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

Global Economic Data and Earnings Calendar

Global Economic Data

Date	Market	Source	Indicator	Period	Actual	Consensus	Previous
06-27	US	Bureau of Economic Analysis	GDP Annualized QoQ	1Q	1.40%	1.40%	1.30%
06-27	US	Bureau of Economic Analysis	Personal Consumption	1Q	1.50%	2.00%	2.00%
06-27	US	Bureau of Economic Analysis	GDP Price Index	1Q	3.10%	3.00%	3.00%
06-27	US	U.S. Department of Energy	EIA Natural Gas Storage Change	21-Jun	52.00	54.00	71.00

Earnings Calendar

Tickers	Company Name	Date of reporting 2Q2024 results	No. of days remaining	Status
QGMD	Qatari German Company for Medical Devices	29-Jul-24	29	Due
AKHI	Al Khaleej Takaful Insurance Company	31-Jul-24	31	Due
BEMA	Damaan Islamic Insurance Company	07-Aug-24	38	Due

Qatar

- **Qatar plans $5.5bn development with Disney-size theme park** – Qatar is starting work on a new QR20bn ($5.5bn) tourism development that will be centered around a large amusement park that's poised to be bigger than Walt Disney Co.'s iconic Magic Kingdom. The Simaisma project will be located about 40 minutes north of the gas-rich nation's capital Doha and ultimately span 8- million square meters (1,976 acres) along 7 kilometers of beachfront land. The development is also set to include an 18-hole golf course surrounded by 300 villas, luxury resorts, a marina and beach club as well as homes and shops. Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company, a unit of the state's sovereign wealth fund, has been appointed by the government to manage the development of the project. "The anchor is the theme park and that phase will be coming first to attract more people to come and invest," Qatari Diar Chief Executive Officer Ali Mohamed Al-Ali said in an interview. "It's part of the government strategy to diversify the economy and invest in the tourism pillar." The development is part of Qatar's years long efforts to transform itself into a vacation destination. Qatari officials have said they want the tourism industry to ultimately contribute 12% to the country's gross domestic product by 2030 and the nation has welcomed throngs of tourists since it hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2022, an event it spent more than $300bn preparing for. Qatari Diar is currently in talks with several international park operators to manage the amusement park and expects to make a decision on who will run it in the coming months, Al-Ali said. (Bloomberg)
- **QNB Group: Board of directors meeting on July 08 -** The QNB Group has announced that its Board of Directors will be holding a meeting on 08/07/2024 to discuss the QNB Group's Board of Directors will conduct a meeting on Monday, 8 July 2024 to discuss the Bank's financial results for the six months period ending 30 June 2024 and to consider an interim profit distribution for the period ending 30 June 2024. (QSE)
- **QCB issues treasury bills, Islamic Sukuk worth QR2.5bn -** Qatar Central Bank (QCB) issued treasury bills and Islamic sukuks with maturities of 7 days, 35 days, 98 days, 189 days, 245 days, and 360 days. The issuance amounted to a total of QR2bn. The Qatar Central Bank said in a post on X, that the issuances of treasury bills were as follows: QR300mn for 7 days (new issuance) at an interest rate of 5.7758%, QR500mn for 35 days (tap issuance) with an interest rate of 5.8030%, and QR500mn for 98 days (tap issuance) with an interest rate of 5.8171%, and QR500mn for a period of 189 days (tap issuance) with an interest rate of 5.7678%, QR500mn (tap issuance) with an interest rate of 5.7171%, and QR200mn (new issuance) with an interest rate of 5.5998%. The total private bids in treasury bills and Islamic sukuks amounted to QR7.4bn. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Qatari financial market performance registers significant boost -** Qatari financial market witnessed significant growth in last year evident by the completion and implementation of qualitative measures and initiatives in the process of outstanding performance of the Qatari financial sector. The growth was reflected in the Qatari financial market performance during 2023, as the QSE general index increased by 1.4% compared to a decrease of 8.13% during 2022, and the market value of listed companies increased by about 2.7% to reach QR624.6bn, according to annual report recently issued by the Qatar Financial Markets Authority (QFMA)**. The influx of foreign investment into the Qatari market continued, with net purchases by non-foreigners reaching QR1.7bn, contributing to the increase in non-Qatari ownership of Qatari shares listed on the financial market. This is in addition to the increase in the contributions of activities brought to the Qatari financial market by QFMA, such as the activities of market maker and liquidity provider, which contributed to about 22% of the total value of market trading, amounting to QR125bn. Margin trading activity also contributed to about 28.8% of the total value of trading during 2023.** Qatar Central Bank Governor and Board Chairman of QFMA H E Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud Al Thani stated in the report the launch of the 3rd QFMA's Strategic Plan 2023-2027 was the starting point and

beginning for this new phase, as this plan is based on the key principles of QNV 2030 and derives its objectives from both the 3rd Qatar National Development Strategy and the 3rd Qatar Financial Sector Strategy. It aims to achieve the sustainability of financial markets, promote green financial instruments, and adopt technological and digital developments. The 3rd QFMA's Strategic Plan includes a set of initiatives and projects that reflect the QFMA's future vision for the financial markets and seeks to achieve the desired goals in the coming years and establishes a regulatory framework and infrastructure for the Qatari financial markets to be in line with the best international standards and practices. Last year witnessed the QFMA's issuance of a set of legislations aimed at accommodating the changes in the regional and international financial markets, attracting more Qatari and non-Qatari investors and reducing the cost, burden and effort on all those dealing with the Qatari financial markets. Sheikh Bandar added, "We would like to emphasize that QFMA, in this new phase in its journey towards elevating the Qatari financial markets to the ranks of developed financial markets, is open to cooperation and coordination with all of the State agencies and parties concerned with the Qatari financial markets, as well to share them with all issued legislation for consultation, and that QFMA is fully prepared to consider and adopt any proposals aimed at development, removing obstacles or facilitating procedures." (Peninsula Qatar)

- **Kahramaa's Director of Production Planning: Qatar's renewable energy set to rise to 18% of energy mix by 2030 -** Director of Production Planning and Business Development at Kahramaa Eng. Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Al Baker has said that the current production of renewable energy in Qatar is estimated at 5% of the total energy mix, forecast to rise to 18% by 2030. In an interview with Qatar News Agency (QNA), Al Baker emphasized the crucial importance of renewable energy for Qatar to achieve the goals outlined in the National Development Strategy 2024-2030. The Qatar National Renewable Energy Strategy aims to develop a sustainable and cost-effective energy system, leveraging the country's abundant natural gas reserves and renewable energy potential. Al Baker highlighted that the strategy aims to reach 4 gigawatts from centralized renewable energy projects and 200 megawatts from distributed projects by 2030. The strategy focuses on three main goals: reducing carbon dioxide emissions through sustainable policies, increasing the share of renewable energy while maintaining grid reliability, and maximizing the social and economic benefits of renewable energy programs. On the economic benefits, Al Baker noted the competitive costs of renewable technologies, making the adoption of renewable energy technologies in Qatar and the region more attractive due to the decreased levelized cost of electricity production. The cost of photovoltaic solar energy has dropped significantly from around 4 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2017 to about 1.5 cents in 2023, with expectations to decrease to around 1 cent per kilowatt-hour by 2030. Similarly, the cost of wind energy has decreased from about 5 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2017 to approximately 4.5 cents in 2023, projected to reach about 4 cents per kilowatt-hour by 2030. The recommended energy mix is expected to reduce the average cost of electricity generation by 15% in 2030. Al Baker also mentioned that the strategy will enhance energy security by diversifying energy sources, ensuring the stability of the energy sector. The strategy adopts a balanced approach, combining centralized renewable energy facilities with high-efficiency gas-powered thermal generation. Qatar's high potential for increasing renewable energy usage is due to the high quality of its solar energy resources, with a global horizontal irradiance among the highest in the world, averaging over 2,000 kilowatt-hours per square meter annually. The strategy focuses on photovoltaic solar technology due to the country's high solar irradiance levels, mature technology, and numerous specialized companies in this field. The current renewable energy production is distributed between the Siraj 1 PV solar plant in Al Kharsaah with a capacity of 800 megawatts and over 9 megawatts from distributed solar projects. Overall, Qatar's energy mix currently relies on thermal generation, with the total thermal power capacity exceeding 12 gigawatts, accounting for over 90% of the country's total power generation capacity. The operation of Siraj 1 and future solar projects by QatarEnergy (with a production capacity of 875 megawatts) reflect the state's commitment to effectively utilizing centralized renewable energy projects. Regarding the anticipated challenges, Al Baker highlighted the limited capabilities of the private sector in contributing effectively to large projects due to the small market size and the lack of expertise among companies. This poses a challenge in achieving the strategy's goals, especially in distributed generation, along with the need for significant investments estimated at $7.6bn by 2030. To continue making progress, it's essential to enable renewable energy development companies to build skills and capabilities, assess the attractiveness of the renewable energy manufacturing sector in Qatar, and consider financial enablers if deemed necessary for the local manufacturing sector. The strategy proposes launching a net billing mechanism to encourage investments in distributed solar projects, coordinating with financial institutions like Qatar Development Bank to offer attractive financing programs for clean energy projects, and streamlining the application process for distributed renewable energy projects through effective coordination with the Ministry of Municipality. Additionally, the strategy suggests establishing clear technical standards and regulations to ensure quality, helping companies develop projects efficiently, coordinating with relevant entities to offer affordable vocational training programs for employees of development, engineering, procurement, construction, and operation and maintenance companies, and activating a supportive strategy for renewable energy tenders to foster the development of local actors. Furthermore, adopting local content targets encourage developers to involve local engineering, procurement, construction, and operation and maintenance companies in renewable energy projects. Kahramaa announced in late April the launch of the Qatar National Renewable Energy Strategy aimed at diversifying and increasing the use of renewable energy sources, particularly solar energy, and integrating them into the electricity mix due to the high quality of solar energy resources in the country. Kahramaa said that the launch of the strategy reflects its belief in a more sustainable future for Qatar and aims to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030 and the National Development Strategy 2024-2030, building on its efforts to enhance renewable energy use and develop related policies and strategies in coordination with 22 key energy stakeholders in Qatar. (Qatar Tribune)

- **Report: Investors upbeat about Qatar's outlook in 2024 -** The investment outlook for 2024 in Qatar remains positive, as highlighted in a recent report by Ernst & Young. The report indicates a strong focus on growth opportunities and capital accessibility. According to the report, 75% of leading investors anticipate higher returns on investments in the next 12 months compared to the previous year, while 94% expect interest rates to either remain stable or decrease in 2024. Despite this optimism, all investors mentioned that they were able to avoid losses during the adjustment period post-2022. Qatar's success has been attributed to its strategic goals and ambitions, particularly the successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup in 2022.This event served as a significant driver of growth over the past decade, leading to an impressive annual GDP growth rate of approximately 31.5% in 2022. Although a period of adjustment was anticipated after the event, resulting in an 8.1% decrease in GDP in 2023 compared to the previous year's peak, Qatar managed to preserve much of its economic growth post-event, with the GDP in 2023 standing at a level around 20.9% higher than that achieved in 2021. The sustained increase in economic output levels can be attributed to the country's ongoing efforts to stimulate economic growth and enhance its business environment. Investors are cautiously optimistic about the national economy expanding by 4 to 6%, with the oil and gas sector anticipated to excel, as 80% foresee a boost from the North Field Expansion project. The tourism and hospitality industry also garners positive views from 40% of respondents, owing to Qatar's heightened global presence through hosting major events, strategic marketing, and infrastructure enhancements. Conversely, the real estate and construction sectors are perceived more cautiously, with 80% and 55% of participants, respectively, anticipating slower growth compared to the national average due to concerns of oversupply. Nevertheless, the strong growth in tourism, exemplified by a record-breaking 4mn visitors in 2023, and initiatives such as the unified GCC tourist visa and relaxed residency permits, may help alleviate these concerns. With respect to the investment environment and tactics, all respondents indicated successful investments in the previous year, and 75% anticipate increased returns in 2024. The majority are targeting a hurdle rate of 10% to 15% for upcoming ventures, while a smaller percentage are aiming for 15% to 20%. Overall, access to capital in Qatar is deemed favorable, although 40% encounter obstacles due to elevated interest rates, cautious banking practices, and foreign currency limitations. (Peninsula Qatar)

- **Qatar's GDP growth expected to rise 2.9% in 2025 -** The latest Economic Insight report for the Middle East, commissioned by ICAEW and compiled by Oxford Economics, predicts a slow recovery for the region in 2024 due to extended oil production curbs. The GCC growth forecast has been revised down to 2.2% from 2.7% three months ago, though non-energy sectors remain resilient, including in Bahrain and Qatar. The OPEC+ group's extension of voluntary output cuts through Q3 implies a delayed recovery in GCC energy sectors. GCC oil output will now shrink by 2.6% this year instead of the 1.3% expansion forecasted three months ago. Saudi Arabia, which is cutting production to the greatest extent, will see oil activities contract by 5% this year, down from a predicted growth of 0.7% three months ago. However, as voluntary production cuts are reversed in 2025, energy sectors will begin making positive contributions to GCC growth. Qatar's GDP growth projection for this year stands at 2.2% and is expected to rise to 2.9% in 2025. In contrast, Bahrain's GDP growth is 3.1% this year, but is expected to slow to 1.4% in 2025. Since Qatar is not involved in the OPEC+ production quotas, its gas sector is a priority, with authorities doubling down on the North Field gas expansion project, promising a positive medium-term impact. Bahrain, on the other hand, continues to diversify its economy and reduce reliance on oil revenues. Last year its non-oil growth grew by 3.4%, accounting for nearly 84% of GDP. High-frequency data paints a positive outlook for non-energy sectors across the GCC. In Saudi Arabia, investments are expected to flow into key sectors supporting giga-projects, including construction, manufacturing, and transportation. Strong momentum in the sports and entertainment sector will also be seen as the country's transformation continues. The hospitality sector will likely follow, with tourism remaining key to Saudi's growth agenda. Tourism is a strategic sector in other countries too and will remain a key growth driver. Tourism activity has rebounded strongly, with record visitor numbers across the GCC in 2023, extending into this year. Non-oil economies will continue to grow despite the GCC's fiscal positions deteriorating. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait will likely see budget deficits this year and next as the current oil price level is below the fiscal breakeven point. However, the overall GCC budget position will likely remain in surplus, bolstered by strong financial standings and favorable credit ratings, allowing continued access to funding from capital markets and IPOs. Hanadi Khalife, Head of Middle East, ICAEW, said: "While geopolitical risks present headwinds for the GCC and wider Middle East, we are encouraged by the ongoing commitment to diversification and sustainability targets. Qatar, for example, became the first GCC sovereign to issue green bonds despite not having explicit net-zero targets. Bahrain is also aligning its non-oil economic growth with its Economic Vision 2030 and COP28 commitments to reduce carbon emissions by 30% by 2035." Scott Livermore, ICAEW Economic Advisor, and Chief Economist and Managing Director, Oxford Economics Middle East, said: "Although the region faces escalating pressures amid slowing global economies, the GCC remains relatively positive due to strong bilateral deals and investment. Qatar recently signed a 20-year supply contract with India for 7.5mn tonnes of liquefied natural gas annually, and a 27-year contract with Taiwan for 4mn tonnes. "Bahrain has also seen significant investment growth following the launch of the Golden License initiative in April 2023, which requires a minimum investment of $50mn and the creation of at least 500 jobs. Bahrain's financial services sector contributed nearly 18% of GDP, surpassing oil, which contributed 16%." Excluding housing rents in some countries, notably Saudi Arabia, inflationary pressures remain contained, with rates below 2% in all GCC countries except Kuwait and the UAE. Given the exchange rate pegs against the US dollar, GCC central banks tend to track the US Federal Reserve's policy rates. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Oxford Economics: Qatar's fiscal balance fiscal balance set to rise to 5.8% of country's GDP this year -** Qatar's fiscal balance is set to rise to 5.8% of the country's GDP this year, Oxford Economics has said in a report. The country's fiscal balance stood at 5.5% of its GDP in 2023, Oxford Economics noted. In its Middle East overview, the researcher estimates Qatar's fiscal balance to account for 5.6% of its GDP in 2025. On the other hand, Qatar's current account has been forecast at 16.4% of the country's GDP in 2024. Next year, it is expected at 14.9% of Qatar's GDP. In 2023, Qatar's current account stood at 16.8% of the country's GDP. Qatar's real GDP growth has been estimated at 2.2% year-on-year (y-o-y) this year, rising to 2.8% y-o-y in 2025, Oxford Economics said. The country's inflation has been estimated at 1.2% y-o-y this year and 2% y-o-y in 2025. Last year, it was 3%, according to Oxford Economics. As for other GCC countries, the researcher noted Kuwait's annual inflation rate for May remained steady at 3.2%, driven by higher prices in food, clothing, and education. This consistent level of inflation underscores persistent pressures within the economy, particularly in essential goods and services. Meanwhile, Oman reported an inflation increase to 0.9% last month. Oxford Economics forecasts inflation in Kuwait to average 2.9% in 2024, and Oman's to average 1.0%. In addition, the Central Bank of UAE has revised its inflation forecast to 2.3% from 2.5%, attributing the adjustment to changes in the consumer basket, rising domestic demand, and a potential depreciation of the dirham. The revision suggests a cautious outlook on inflationary pressures and their impact on the UAE's economic stability. The UAE Ministry of Finance has unveiled several projects aimed at enhancing competitiveness and its status as a global financial hub. A key initiative is the development of the Local Debt Capital Market, which will diversify funding sources and enhance financial market resilience. This aligns with the UAE's broader strategy to future-proof its economy and attract global investment. In addition, the next phase of the 'Dubai Future Solutions' initiative, featuring an AED100mn agreement between the Dubai Future Foundation and the Hussain Sajwani-DAMAC Foundation, focuses on fostering innovation and technology. The researcher projects GDP growth to reach 3.8% in 2024, reflecting the positive impact of these initiatives. As for the wider Mena region, the World Bank has announced a $700mn budget support package for Egypt as part of a $6bn, three-year program to boost private sector participation, fiscal resilience, and 'green' economic growth. This funding, integral to Egypt's economic reform agenda, enhances macroeconomic stability and sustainable development. Egypt's recent funding totals nearly $60bn, bolstering foreign exchange reserves. This support is expected to help Egypt manage external shocks and maintain stability. Oxford Economics anticipates Egypt's foreign exchange reserves will stabilize at around $45bn by the end of 2024, providing a buff er against economic volatility and supporting reforms. (Gulf Times)
- **Prime Minister inaugurates QR20bn Simaisma project -** The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani inaugurated Thursday the Simaisma project, which is the latest project of the Ministry of Municipality and is managed by Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company, with QR 20bn investment, on an area of 8mn square meters. The Minister of Municipality HE Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Attiyah; a number of Their Excellencies the Ministers; a number of dignitaries, experts, and officials of the State of Qatar's real estate investment and tourism sectors attended the inauguration ceremony. Upon completion, the project will become a new cultural landmark, adding to the country's distinctive landmarks and unique tourist destinations, and a 7-kilometer-long extension of the waterfront to the Simaisma area, which is distinguished by its stunning view of the eastern coast of the State of Qatar, providing the people of Qatar and its visitors with a unique tourism and entertainment experience. In his speech during the ceremony, HE Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Attiyah emphasized the importance of concerted efforts and close cooperation between partners in the public and private sectors to enhance and continue the growth process witnessed by the State of Qatar. His Excellency said that the Ministry of Municipality is moving with determination and steadfastness towards achieving the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 and building a more prosperous and stable future for the next generation economically, socially, and environmentally. He added that the ministry looks forward to enriching the tourism and entertainment sector with more projects that meet the growing demand in this vital sector. His Excellency indicated that the project is considered a new addition to the prominent development process witnessed by the State of Qatar and is a living embodiment of the rational vision adopted by Qatar's leadership toward excellence and comprehensive development. He pointed out that the State of Qatar has taken great steps in implementing huge infrastructure projects that realize its national vision to become today one of the most prominent countries thanks to its

diverse investments, strengthening its position as a tourist and investment destination. HE the Minister of Municipality pointed out that Qatar has witnessed continuous successes and achievements, which are the result of the collaboration of the private and public sectors, which enhances the region's attractiveness for investment and its impact on the local economy and benefits the society. In this context, he added that the Ministry of Municipality plays an essential role in developing, organizing, and planning the real estate sector, where it successfully launched the first phase of the real estate platform for the State of Qatar, which aims to raise the level of transparency and facilitate decision-making through the use of accurate and reliable data. To emphasize the importance of tourism, the State of Qatar has made enormous investments to develop infrastructure and tourist destinations. He said that the Ministry of Municipality hopes this new project will enrich Qatar's tourism and entertainment sectors. His Excellency added that the Ministry of Municipality announces the launch of one of the most important future projects for the State of Qatar, the Simaisma Project, which, upon completion, will be a unique cultural tourist landmark, added to the most prominent landmarks in the State of Qatar within the framework of achieving this vision and the objectives of the third National Development Strategy 2024-2030. The Simaisma Project will rely on three main pillars, most notably reducing unskilled labor through the adoption of smart systems and technology in construction, in addition to the use of eco-friendly local materials, as well as the participation of the private sector and attracting foreign investment. His Excellency pointed out that the project, in which the volume of investment between the private and public sectors will reach around QR 20bn, and whose development is being overseen by Qatari Diar in cooperation with the private sector, goes beyond being a unique destination for tourism in Qatar and the world, to be one of the new sources of attraction for developers and investors in the country in the fields of tourism, hospitality, and entertainment. The project will also help, directly and indirectly, in creating new job opportunities, in addition to providing investment opportunities for various sectors, thus contributing to the enrichment and diversification of the national economy. For his part, CEO of Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company, Engineer Ali bin Mohammed Al Ali expressed his pride in the significant trust that the Ministry of Municipality has placed in Qatari Diar to manage the project. He said that their latest projects have been planned under the auspices of the Ministry of Municipality, aligning with the continuous growth trajectory of the State of Qatar, adding that this project will set a new benchmark for tourism in the region and will write a new chapter in the ongoing success story of Qatar. The real estate sector, with an estimated market value of around $485bn in Qatar by 2024, ranks second only to the energy sector in attracting foreign direct investments Eng. Al Ali said pointing that real estate sector in Qatar has witnessed steady growth in recent years, driven by increasing demand for residential and commercial properties, significant tourism growth, hosting major events, and the expansion of business and commerce in the country. In the same context, the CEO of Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company, in remarks on the sidelines of the launch of the Simaisma project, stated that the project covers an area of 8mn square meters of infrastructure. It is a partnership with the private sector, with more than 80% participation. About 650,000 square meters of the project consist of world-class amusement parks. He pointed out that the partnership with the private sector will provide a significant investment opportunity in this field in collaboration with Qatari Diar, which manages the project. The project will also increase employment opportunities at all stages, from construction to operation, and will enhance economic diversification, particularly in the tourism sector. The project represents a promising investment opportunity for the private sector, featuring more than 16 tourist plots for the private sector, including distinctive resorts distributed across four unique zones in terms of character and use. Additionally, it will house a massive amusement city, an 18-hole international golf course, residential villas, a yacht marina, and luxurious restaurants and shops. Sustainability is a fundamental pillar of the project, relying on smart systems, using local and recycled materials, and leveraging the latest construction technologies. The integrated tourism project marks a significant step towards achieving the ambitious goals of the National Development Strategy 2024-2030, launched earlier this year. This strategy aims to enhance the contribution of the non-oil sector to the Qatari economy, empower the private sector, and encourage foreign direct investments. The project provides promising investment opportunities for real estate developers and tourism investors, supporting the path of development and diversifying the national economy's resources. It is noteworthy that Qatari Diar owns 50 investment projects under development in 20 countries around the world, with a total investment value of approximately $35bn. The company seeks to provide investment opportunities for local and foreign real estate developers in many of its projects worldwide. Through its pioneering projects, the company has contributed to supporting sustainable development in Qatar and developing the country's real estate sector. Among the company's most prominent projects are Lusail City, which is considered the largest sustainable and smart city in Qatar, the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center, Sheraton Park, and the Commercial Street. Qatari Diar's vision is to establish itself as a real estate investment company that enjoys the highest levels of trust, credibility, and efficiency. It aims to harness its energies and capabilities to achieve high-quality sustainable development, meticulous planning, and the use of innovative methods in the world of real estate. (Peninsula Qatar)

- **NPC: Qatar records higher exports of petroleum gases and re-exports; trade surplus at QR17.59bn in May -** Robust growth in exports of petroleum gases and re-exports led Qatar to post a 0.9% month-on-month jump in trade surplus to QR17.59bn in May 2024, according to the official estimates. Total exports (valued free on board) totaled QR28.1bn, while the total imports (cost, insurance and freight) amounted to QR10.51bn in the review period, said the figures released by the National Planning Council. However, the overall trade surplus shrank 3.5% year-on-year in May 2024. The country's total exports of domestic goods amounted to QR26.64bn, which shot up 1.1% on a monthly basis, even as it fell 0.7% on an annualized basis in May 2024. The country’s exports of petroleum gases and other gaseous hydrocarbons soared 8.5% month-on-month to QR17.14bn, even as those of crude declined by 15.3% to QR4.19bn, non-crude by 12.6% to QR2.04bn and other commodities by 0.5% to QR3.27bn in May 2024. On a yearly basis, the exports of petroleum gases were seen declining 0.9% and crude by 6.3%; while those of non-crude and other commodities grew 3.6% and 5.4% respectively in the review period. Petroleum gases accounted for 64.34% of the total exports compared to 64.44% a year-ago period, crude 15.73% (16.66%), non-crude 7.66% (7.34%) and others 12.27% (11.55%). In May 2024, Qatar's shipments to China amounted to QR4.76bn or 16.9% of the total exports of the country, followed by South Korea QR3.66bn (13%), India QR3.11bn (11.1%), Singapore QR2.4bn (8.5%) and the UAE QR2.1bn (7.5%). On a monthly basis, the country's exports to the UAE zoomed 29.55%, Singapore by 11.52% and India by 4.6%; while those to South Korea and China declined 13.79% and 8.24% respectively in the review period. On a yearly basis, Qatar's exports to the UAE shot up 37.52%, Singapore by 23.71%, South Korea by 2.9%, China by 2.48% and India by 0.61% in May 2024. The country’s re-exports were valued at QR1.46bn, which registered 30.7% and 49.2% growth month-on-month and year-on-year respectively in the review period. Qatar's total imports showed a 4.6% and 9.6% increase on monthly and yearly basis respectively in May 2024. The country's imports from China amounted to QR1.58bn or 15% of the total imports; followed by the US QR1.33bn (12.6%), Japan QR0.74bn (7%), Germany QR0.56bn (5.4%) and Italy by QR0.53bn (5.1%) in the review period. On a monthly basis, the country's imports from Germany soared 51.75%, China by 19.52%, Japan by 18.62% and Italy by 11.34%; whereas those from the US shrank 10.46% in May 2024. On a yearly basis, Qatar's imports from Japan expanded 196.79%, Germany by 20.56%, Italy by 13.92% and China by 12.78%; while those from the US decreased by 28.23% in the review period. In May 2024, "Motor Cars & Other Motor Vehicles for the Transport of Persons”, was at the top of the imported group and valued at QR0.8bn, which increased 72.3% year-on-year. In second place was "Parts of Airplanes or Helicopters" with a value of QR0.4bn, showing an annual increase of 50% in May 2024. The "Electrical Apparatus for Line Telephony/Telegraphy, Telephone Sets Etc. and Parts Thereof" group saw imports of QR0.3bn, which however decreased 20% on an annualized basis in May 2024. (Gulf Times)

- **Qatar May Foreign Reserves QR249.17bn -** Qatar's foreign reserves were QR249.17bn in May, according to the Qatar Central Bank. Reserves +0.39% m/m, biggest pct rise since start of the year. (Bloomberg)

- **Qatar bolsters global logistics rankings -** Qatar is in the race to enhance its position in the global logistics standings by implementing numerous investments in prime areas including the development of the port and partnering with several ports worldwide. According to a recent report by PWC, the industry continues to remain resilient this year as Qatar is at the forefront of carrying out infrastructure projects including the expansion of Hamad Port and Hamad International Airport in addition to enhancing land borders at Abu Samra to facilitate smooth and secure trade flows. Market experts highlight that these projects have resulted in attracting key shipping lines and airlines and bolstered Qatar's logistical capabilities. They also outlined that the country focused on developing regional integration through projects such as the "Friendship Bridge" with Bahrain and a rail link with Saudi Arabia to enhance connectivity and market access in the GCC. This has attracted major shipping lines and airlines, further solidifying Qatar's logistical capabilities. It has also focused on enhancing its regional integration through projects like the plans for a Friendship Bridge with Bahrain and a rail link with Saudi Arabia to improve connectivity and market access across the region. The mega sporting event hosted two years back show-cased Qatar's logistics skillset with improved infrastructure works and ensuring the safety of all tourists and residents. Leading the sector was notably the national carrier - Qatar Airways, which played a vital part in strengthening the global cargo movement. Top industry leaders mentioned that this enabled the country to pave the towards enhancing its national logistics reputation. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Realty trading volume exceeds QR439mn in last week -** The volume of real estate trading in sales contracts registered with the Real Estate Registration Department of the Ministry of Justice from June 9 to 13 of 2024 reached QR398,338,931, while the total sales contracts for the real estate bulletin for residential units during the same period reached QR41,240,045. The weekly bulletin issued by the department indicates that the list of real estate properties traded for sale has included vacant lands, houses, residential buildings, shops, an apartment complex, and residential units. Sales were concentrated in the municipalities of Doha, Al Rayyan, Al Daayen, Umm Salal, Al Khor, Al Thakhira, Al Shamal, Al Wakrah, and the areas of The Pearl Island, Legtaifiya, Al Kharayej. The volume of real estate trading in sales contracts registered with the Real Estate Registration Department of the Ministry of Justice amounted to more than QR402m from June 2 to 6. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Digital commerce transaction value to reach QR30bn in 2024 -** The digital commerce market is currently witnessing a sturdy boom in Qatar as several reports indicate the upward trajectory growth in 2024. According to Statista, the transaction value of the sector is estimated to amount to $8.25bn (QR30.01bn) this year with a compound annual growth rate of 8.30% within the next four years. The total amount of digital commerce sector is expected to total $11.35bn by 2028. Speaking to The Peninsula on the resilient industry, Anas Noufal, a digital commerce market expert reflected upon the key trends that bolster the sector in Qatar. He said: "The industry has been always robust, given the influx of new products that enter Qatar's market, especially after the World Cup 2022. Numerous investors and tourists understood the market value in Qatar during the FIFA tournament and apparently shifted their business interests to this part of the region." Noufal stressed the importance of the staggering market value, which reflects Qatar's commitment to its national strategy vision 2030. Albeit competent to withstand Qatar's e-commerce industry, the digital commerce platform serves as a catalyst to residents across the country. The expert added, "The online services industry is undoubtedly a challenge to the digital commerce due to its latest and enhanced technologies. However, our analysis clarifies that the sector implements an integrated approach to the customer journey and fosters a unified buying experience." He added that the surging population in Qatar has resulted in a significant boost for the market. "We forecast an amazing track record for the sector in the coming years and are optimistic to see a lot of individuals contributing towards Qatar's GDP growth." In its report, Statista mentions that the number of users in the digital commerce market is anticipated to reach a total of 2.83mn users during the forecast period. However, the average transaction value per user in the industry is expected to reach a total worth of $3.96k in 2024. As Qatar strives in the race for competitive digital commerce, the US tops in the global perspective with the highest transaction value amounting to $2.2tn in 2024. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Qatar committed to centralized renewable energy project use -** The operation of Siraj 1 and future solar projects by QatarEnergy, with a production capacity of 875 megawatts, reflect the state's commitment to effectively utilizing centralized renewable energy projects. Regarding the anticipated challenges, Baker highlighted the limited capabilities of the private sector in contributing effectively to large projects due to the small market size and the lack of expertise among companies. This poses a challenge in achieving the strategy's goals, especially in distributed generation, along with the need for significant investments estimated at $7.6bn by 2030. To continue making progress, it's essential to enable renewable energy development companies to build skills and capabilities, assess the attractiveness of the renewable energy manufacturing sector in Qatar, and consider financial enablers if deemed necessary for the local manufacturing sector. The strategy proposes launching a net billing mechanism to encourage investments in distributed solar projects, coordinating with financial institutions like Qatar Development Bank to offer attractive financing programs for clean energy projects, and streamlining the application process for distributed renewable energy projects through effective coordination with the Ministry of Municipality. Additionally, the strategy suggests establishing clear technical standards and regulations to ensure quality, helping companies develop projects efficiently, coordinating with relevant entities to offer affordable vocational training programs for employees of development, engineering, procurement, construction, and operation and maintenance companies, and activating a supportive strategy for renewable energy tenders to foster the development of local actors. Furthermore, adopting local content targets to encourage developers to involve local engineering, procurement, construction, and operation and maintenance companies in renewable energy projects. Kahramaa announced in late April the launch of the Qatar National Renewable Energy Strategy aimed at diversifying and increasing the use of renewable energy sources, particularly solar energy, and integrating them into the electricity mix due to the high quality of solar energy resources in the country. Kahramaa said that the launch of the strategy reflects its belief in a more sustainable future for Qatar and aims to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030 and the National Development Strategy 2024-2030, building on its efforts to enhance renewable energy use and develop related policies and strategies in coordination with 22 key energy stakeholders in Qatar. (Qatar Tribune)

International

- **US inflation cools in May, boosting hopes of Fed rate cut -** US monthly inflation was unchanged in May as a modest increase in the cost of services was offset by the largest drop in goods prices in six months, drawing the Federal Reserve closer to start cutting interest rates later this year. The report from the Commerce Department on Friday also showed consumer spending rose marginally last month. Underlying prices advanced at the slowest pace in six months, raising optimism that the U.S. central bank could engineer a much-desired "soft landing" for the economy in which inflation cools without triggering a recession and a sharp rise in unemployment. Traders raised their bets for a Fed rate cut in September. "This was a very Fed-friendly report that should keep the September rate cut in play, while at the same time increasing investor confidence that moderate economic growth can be maintained even as rates stay higher for longer," said Scott Anderson, chief U.S. economist at BMO Capital Markets. "The sharp slowdown in core inflation is just what the doctor needed to see to keep the economy on the soft-landing glide-path." The flat reading in the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index last month followed an unrevised 0.3% gain in April, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis said. It was the first time in six months that PCE inflation was unchanged. Goods prices fell 0.4%, the biggest drop since November. There were big declines in prices of recreational goods and vehicles as well as furnishings and durable household equipment. (Reuters)
- **China issues rare earth regulations to further protect domestic supply -** China has unveiled a list of rare earth regulations aimed at protecting

supplies in the name of national security, laying out rules on the mining, smelting and trade in the critical materials used to make products from magnets in electric vehicles to consumer electronics. The regulations, issued by the State Council or cabinet on Saturday, say rare earth resources belong to the state, and that the government will oversee the development of the industry around rare earths - a group of 17 minerals of which China has in recent years become the world's dominant producer, accounting for nearly 90% of global refined output. Their global industrial significance is such that under a law that entered into force in May the EU set ambitious 2030 targets for domestic production of minerals crucial in the green transition - particularly rare earths due to their use in permanent magnets that power motors in EVs and wind energy. EU demand is forecast to soar sixfold in the decade to 2030 and sevenfold by 2050. The new Chinese regulations, which will take effect on Oct. 1, say the State Council will establish a rare earth product traceability information system. Enterprises in rare earth mining, smelting and separation, and the export of rare earth products, shall establish a product flow record system, shall "truthfully" record the flow, and shall enter it into the traceability system, the State Council said. China already last year introduced restrictions on exports of the elements germanium and gallium, used widely in the chip-making sector, citing the need to protect national security and interests. It also banned the export of technology to make rare earth magnets, in addition to imposing a ban on technology to extract and separate rare earths. Those rules fanned fears that restrictions in rare earth supplies might help increase tensions with the West, particularly the United States, which accuses China of using economic coercion to influence other countries. Beijing denies the claim. China's rare earths regulations also come as the EU gears up to impose provisional tariffs on Chinese EVs on July 4 to protect the 27-state bloc from what it says is a flood of EVs produced with unfair state subsidies, though both sides have said they plan talks on the proposed tariffs. (Reuters)

Regional

- **ESG and sovereign issuances drive expansion of Mena fixed income market in H1-2024 -** The Middle East and North Africa (Mena) market for sukuk has continued to expand in the first six months of 2024, mainly paced by ESG (environment, social and governance) and sovereign issuances, according to data from Bloomberg's Capital Markets League Tables. The growth in sukuk reflected issuer initiatives to broaden their funding base and capitalize on increasing investor interest in Islamic finance portfolios. Volumes for ESG-related sukuk, where funding is allocated to green and social projects, increased by 48% year-on-year to $6.2bn from eight issuances in the first half (H1) of 2024. Saudi Arabia was the leading issuer, accounting for $3.98bn from five sukuks, with the UAE representing the remaining $2.25bn. The region's banks were the driver, with a notable debut issuance from Emirates Islamic Bank ($750mn). The positive trend reflects the commitment of Islamic finance in the region to ESG investing, in relation to the significant climate finance announcements made by the UAE during COP28 last year. The Islamic loan market, however, has lagged behind the uptick in bond issuance during H1-2024, despite offering competitive rates and terms, compared to conventional loans. Islamic loan volumes in the Mena region floated around $13.35bn in H1-2024, a 21% year-on-year decrease, reflecting the level of activity seen in the bond market since the pandemic. Global sovereigns have driven the sector in H1-2024, with Saudi Arabia issuing $33.6bn in the local and international capital markets, followed by Malaysia $4.3bn, and the UAE $2.9bn. Noteworthy transactions including Saudi Arabia $5bn sukuk transaction split across 3-, 6- and 10-year tranches and Bahrain $1bn 7 year sukuk. "The continued expansion of Mena Islamic debt issuances aligns with broader trends in the fixed income space while pointing to increased issuer interest in sustainable debt and an appetite to diversify portfolios. In the second half of the year, we can expect to see continued growth, particularly for ESG-related Sukuk, reflecting a deepening commitment to sustainable finance in the Mena region," said Venty Mulani, Data Specialist – Sustainable Fixed Income, Bloomberg. (Gulf Times)
- **Saudi Arabia's April trade surplus soars to record $41.4bn -** The trade balance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reached a surplus of SAR41.4bn ($11bn) in April 2024, which is the highest level so far this year, according to the preliminary international trade data released by the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT). The data shows a 36% monthly growth and an increase of SAR10.967bn compared to the surplus of SAR30.443bn posted in March of the same year. The trade balance has grown by over 48.5% since the beginning of the year, with an increase of SAR13.525bn, as it stood at SAR27.885bn in January, stated the report. The kingdom's total international trade exceeded SAR162bn, with goods exports reaching SAR101.708bn, accounting for 63% of total trade. Goods imports reached SAR60.297bn. Non-oil domestic exports amounted to SAR16.234bn in April 2024, representing 16% of total exports. Oil exports amounted to SAR79.326bn, accounting for 78% of total exports, while re-exports value reached SAR6.147bn, representing 6% of total exports. In April, the Asian group of countries, excluding Arab and Islamic countries, topped the group of importing countries, accounting for 50.2% of the kingdom's total goods exports, with a value of SAR51.09bn. The European Union group of countries was second, accounting for 16.5% of total goods exports, with a value of SAR16.757bn. The GCC group of countries was third, accounting for 12.4% of total goods exports, with a value of SAR12.562bn. In terms of exports by country, China was the largest importer, accounting for 16.6% of the kingdom's total goods exports, with a value of SAR16.925bn in April, while Japan followed with a value of SAR9.321bn and a share of 9.2% of total goods exports, said the GASTAT report. India was third as the largest importer, with a value of SAR8.250bn and a share of 8.1% of total goods exports. Non-oil exports, including re-exports, passed through 29 diverse customs outlets and ports (sea, land, and air), with a preliminary value of SAR22.382bn, stated the report. King Fahd Industrial Port in Jubail achieved the highest value among all available means of transport and different outlets, with a value of SAR3.594bn, or 16.1% of the total, it added. (Zawya)
- **Value of Saudi non-oil exports to China tops $47bn in five years -** The value of Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports to China during the past five years from 2019 to 2023 exceeded SR176bn ($46.93bn). Chemicals, polymers and metals topped in the list of Saudi non-oil exports to China, a report said. China occupies a prominent position as the first destination for Saudi exports, with a ratio of 15% of total exports, according to the international trade report for the first quarter of 2024 issued recently by the General Authority for Statistics (Gastat), the Saudi Gazette said. Transport and logistics sector represents one of the major components of the services exports sector, and one of the promising sectors contributing to increasing non-oil exports, along with the goods and re-exports sectors. The export of services to China recorded their best performance in 2023, compared to previous years, with an increase of 40% over the previous year, with a value of SR182bn, according to the preliminary data released by Gastat. The rise in services export was supported by the recovery of the travel sector, which recorded a surge of 43%. The travel sector constitutes 74% of the total services, with a value of SR135bn, followed by the transport sector, whose exports amounted to SR24.2bn, and then exports of communications services, with a value of SR6.3bn. It is noteworthy that the efforts to boost Saudi exports to China are a continuation of Saudi Arabia's efforts to further strengthen relations with China. The meeting of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman with Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2016 in Riyadh was a landmark initiative in this regard. During the visit several agreements and memorandums of understanding were signed between the two governments. These included a memorandum to enhance joint cooperation regarding the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which is a key component of BRI. The Saudi-Chinese relations were strengthened significantly in 2019, following the visit of Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman to China, during which the summit level meetings reviewed the joint coordination efforts made to enhance cooperation between Saudi Arabia and China, which reflects the depth of relations and strategic partnership between the two friendly countries in various fields. (Zawya)
- **Saudi EXIM Bank signs deal with OPEC Fund for International Development -** The Saudi Export-Import Bank (EXIM) and the OPEC Fund for International Development have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enhance cooperation, support development initiatives, and promote Saudi non-oil exports in mutually beneficial markets. The agreement, inked during the 2024 OPEC Development

Forum in Vienna, was signed by CEO of Saudi EXIM Eng. Saad bin Abdulaziz Al-Khalab and the Director General of the OPEC Fund for International Development, Dr. Abdulhamid Alkhalifa. Eng. Al-Khalb emphasized that the MOU reflects Saudi EXIM's commitment to forging robust international partnerships and contributing to sustainable development efforts in collaboration with the global community. The initiative aims to bolster Saudi non-oil exports in international markets, thereby supporting local investors and strengthening the non-oil national economy in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 goals. He praised the OPEC Fund for International Development's role in promoting economic growth across more than 70 countries worldwide and highlighted the EXIM Bank's enthusiasm for its pivotal role in these initiatives. During the forum, Eng. Al-Khalb led Saudi EXIM's delegation in exploring opportunities for international development initiatives, enhancing trade relations, and establishing partnerships to facilitate Saudi non-oil exports. He held meetings with various ministers and CEOs of international commercial and development institutions, including discussions with Minister of State for Financial Affairs in the Maldives Hussain Adam on enhancing cooperation for Saudi exports in Asian markets. Additionally, he met with CEO of Africa 50 Alain Ebobisse to explore collaboration opportunities for Saudi exports in African markets, as well as discussions on expanding exports to Latin America and the Caribbean. (Zawya)

- **Al-Jadaan highlights Saudi efforts to boost non-oil revenues and diversify economy -** Saudi Minister of Finance Mohammed Al-Jadaan concluded his participation in the OPEC Fund Development Forum and Ministerial Meeting, which was held in Vienna, capital of Austria, on June 25-26. Addressing the meeting, Al-Jadaan highlighted Saudi Arabia's efforts to boost non-oil revenues and diversify its economy in a systematic, strategic way. This is part of Saudi Vision 2030, which targets opening up new sectors that provide the foundation for sustainable growth in production and non-oil exports, he said. The minister said that these efforts will be supported by labor market reforms to enhance female participation in the workforce, continued growth in higher education and training to provide Saudi youth with the necessary skills, as well as improvements in the ecosystem for private sector investment while providing support to small- and medium-sized enterprises. Al-Jadaan acknowledged the challenges that low-income developing countries face while noting that each country's own actions play the driving role in achieving sustained economic development over time. The minister said Saudi Arabia was in a good position to pursue this development strategy, given its large, accumulated savings and its rich natural resource base, as well as the capabilities of the state. He highlighted the importance of having a clear strategic focus and strong political leadership to push for and stimulate reforms, in addition to the willingness to adjust implementation plans while taking into account lessons learned. On the sidelines of the forum, Al-Jadaan signed a three-way arrangement with the President of the OPEC Fund Dr. Abdulhamid Alkhalifa, and Somalia's Minister of Finance Bihi Iman Egeh, to support the economic recovery in Somalia to reduce its debt burden with the OPEC Fund and resume financing operations in the country, in line with the IMF & World Bank's Enhanced "HIPC" initiative. The Saudi minister also participated in the inauguration of the #OPECFund expanded headquarters at the renovated Palais Colloredo-Mannsfeld on Vienna's historic WienerRingstraße. The OPEC Fund is a multilateral development finance institution based in Austria. It was established by the member states of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1976 with the aim of enhancing cooperation between the member states of OPEC and other developed countries in order to aid developing nations, especially low-income countries, in the pursuit of social and economic progress. The Fund's Ministerial Council and the Forum convene annually in Vienna, and the OPEC Fund focuses on people and projects that meet basic needs such as food, energy, clean water, sanitation, healthcare, and education, with the aim of encouraging self-reliance and inspiring hope for the future. (Zawya)
- **Saudi-US Council meeting aims to enhance trade and investment cooperation -** The 8th Saudi-US Trade and Investment Council meeting (TIFA) was held in Washington on Friday. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Governor of the Authority for International Relations Abdulaziz Al Sakran and the Assistant United States Trade Representative (AUSTR) for Europe and the Middle East Bryant Trick, with the participation of government and private sector entities from both sides. The meeting discussed ways to promote bilateral trade and resolve its constraints, trade policies, and technical regulations for international trade. It also reviewed procedures for the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures in agricultural, food, and pharmaceutical products, intellectual property rights policies and legislation, e-commerce, trade and investment cooperation, and the exchange of experiences. On the sidelines of the meeting, a roundtable with the Saudi and American private sector focused on promoting bilateral trade and investment in major sectors of the Kingdom. It also addressed challenges and obstacles facing the private sector in trade and investment, empowering SME partnerships, strengthening SMEs' business capacities, and fostering cooperation in innovation, technology, and localization. Additionally, trade and investment opportunities in the Saudi Green and Middle East Green Initiatives were discussed, along with various other bilateral themes. The Saudi delegation participated in several meetings and workshops, including "Middle East and USA: Investments & Opportunities" with American ambassadors in the Gulf region, and the Opening Session of the SelectUSA Investment Summit, chaired by US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. The delegation also took part in the fifth GCC-US Trade and Investment Dialogue, a discussion session titled "Invest Saudi in Tech," the United States-Saudi Forum "Investing in Our Shared Future," the GCC-US Roundtable meeting, and the Saudi-US Roundtable meeting with private sector participation from both sides. The delegation included representatives from the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Investment, Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Economy and Planning, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, General Authority for Foreign Trade, Saudi Food and Drug Authority, Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority, General Authority for Military Industries, Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization, Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property, Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority, Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority, Research, Development and Innovation Authority, Public Investment Fund, Saudi Green Initiative, Federation of Saudi Chambers, US-Saudi Business Council, National Center for Vegetation Cover Development and Combating Desertification, and many interested Saudi companies. (Zawya)
- **Saudi developer Dar Global eyes $300mn investment in US expansion -** Saudi property developer Dar Global (DARD.L), plans to invest $300mn in New York, Miami and Los Angeles in the coming months as it seeks partners to develop luxury homes the United States. London-listed Dar Global hopes to announce its latest development in the United States before the year-end, said Ziad El Chaar, Dar Global's chief executive officer. He said Dar Global has been meeting with top real estate developers, but declined to identify the firms with whom it might partner. "We are really focusing on closing the first project in the United States before the end of the year," El Chaar said in an interview from Dubai. He said Dar Global is ready to raise debt in and outside the United States to help finance its U.S. projects, and that its $300mn investment will be in the form of equity. Dar Global, the international arm of Saudi Arabia's Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development Company (4300.SE), hopes to sell at least half of the homes in its U.S. developments to non-U.S. buyers, El Chaar said. Dar Al Arkan in November 2022 signed an agreement with the Trump Organization, the company of former U.S. President Donald Trump, to use the Trump brand for its $4bn project in the Gulf state of Oman that includes a golf course, hotel and villas. Trump enjoyed close ties with Gulf states during his tenure as president, including Saudi Arabia which has invested $2bn with a firm of Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and former aide, incorporated after Trump left office. El Chaar said while it will be an "honor" for Dar Global to partner with the Trump Organization or the Kushner Companies, Kushner's family real estate firm, in its U.S. expansion, he did not think they have the "right product" as they are too focused on the U.S. market, as opposed to the international buyer targeted by Dar Global. (Reuters)

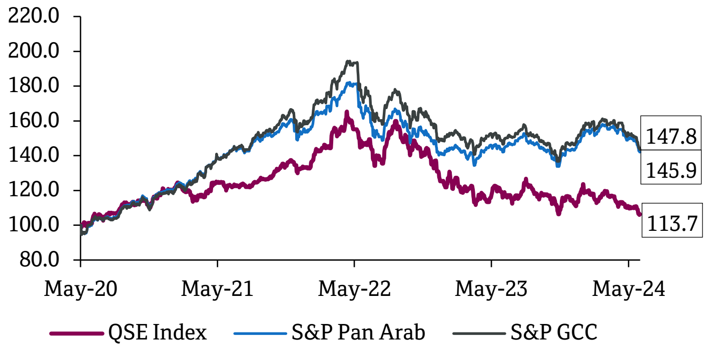
- **Fitch affirms Abu Dhabi's rating at 'AA', with a stable outlook -** Fitch Ratings has affirmed Abu Dhabi's rating at 'AA' with a stable outlook, reflecting the emirate's strong fiscal position and high GDP per capita. Abu Dhabi's government debt, which stood at 15% of projected 2024 GDP in June, was among the lowest of Fitch-rated sovereigns, with sovereign net foreign assets (SNFA) among the highest, at 225% of GDP at end-2023 ($672bn), up significantly from end-2022 due to strong global stock markets. "We forecast Abu Dhabi will run fiscal surpluses of 5.4% of GDP in 2024 and 3.6% in 2025, after our estimate of 11% of GDP in 2023," Fitch said. Oil production is also forecast to rise, in line with OPEC+'s June agreement to reach 3.375mn barrels per day by December 2025, which Fitch said was still well below Abu Dhabi's stated production capacity of 4.85mn barrels per day. This will also partly offset lower Brent oil prices, which Fitch projects to average $70 per barrel in 2025 and $65 in 2026. Spending is projected to remain contained within a target band of 260bn to 300bn UAE dirhams ($68bn to $81.67bn), with the majority of Abu Dhabi's capital spending undertaken by state-owned enterprises. Constraints have been raised from "a high dependence on hydrocarbons, a relatively weak but improving economic policy framework and low governance indicators compared with peers," Fitch said. (Zawya)
- **Fitch affirms UAE's rating at 'AA-', outlook stable -** Fitch has affirmed 'AA-' rating for the UAE with a stable outlook, based on the Emirate's strong external asset position and a high GDP per capita. Abu Dhabi's sovereign net foreign assets, which accounted for 122% of the UAE GDP in 2023, have further elevated the country's position, which is among the highest of Fitch-rated sovereigns. Fitch projects the consolidated budget for the UAE to remain in surplus in 2024 at 4.1% of GDP after 7.8% in 2023, with surpluses in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, which received a 'AA' rating a day earlier, along with budget deficits in Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah. "We forecast consolidated UAE government debt at 24% of GDP at end-2024, well below the 'AA' category median of 49%," Fitch noted, saying it will be broadly stable in 2025 and 2026. "Individual emirates have varied debt profiles, with Sharjah standing out with a higher debt burden," Fitch added, with Dubai having repaid 29bn UAE dirhams ($7.9bn), or 1.5% of the UAE GDP, in market and private debt in 2023, and Emirates NBD Bank PJSC's loans to the Dubai government fell as well. According to Fitch, the UAE's strengths are balanced by weak governance indicators relative to rating peers, the country's high dependence on hydrocarbon income and the significant leverage of GREs. Despite a moderate government debt/GDP ratio, Fitch said it views the UAE as characterized by high leverage in its economy. "We estimate overall contingent liabilities from GREs [government-related entities] of the emirates and the FG [federal government] at about 62% of UAE 2023 GDP and gross non-bank private external debt stands at 46% of GDP," it said. Fitch further forecasts overall GDP growth to slow to 3.1% in 2024 and pick up to 4.9% in 2025 after 3.6% in 2023. "We expect non-oil growth of 4.3% and hydrocarbon GDP to contract by 0.4% in 2024 as average oil production in 2024 will contract despite the loosening of OPEC+ quotas in 2H24. We project non-oil growth to slow to 3.4% in 2025 but remain relatively robust despite global headwinds, supported by government and GRE spending, a robust real estate sector, dynamic past population growth and GCC demand. The hydrocarbon sector will expand by 9.5% in 2025 due to higher OPEC+ production caps," Fitch said. Security risks also remain on a geopolitical level with tensions between Iran and Israel and the US that Fitch said were a risk to the region, in particular to Abu Dhabi's hydrocarbon infrastructure and to Dubai as a trade, tourism and financial hub. (Zawya)
- **Adnoc with $150bn budget turns into top dealmaker -** For years, Abu Dhabi's main oil producer was known as a sleepy state company content to churn out crude from its vast oil fields. But that stodgy reputation is getting a dramatic makeover as it uses a $150bn budget to become one of the world's most active energy dealmakers. Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (Adnoc) this week took a big step in its global push by suggesting it could raise an offer for German chemicals maker Covestro AG to about $12.5bn. It's already strung together a number of smaller deals, but a Covestro purchase would be the biggest international acquisition by a Adnoc's Gulf company and announce ability to pay top dollar to match its outsized goals. The Gulf company's ambitions were fired up about eighteen months ago at a board meeting inside Adnoc's glass-clad skyscraper overlooking the blue Gulf waters along Abu Dhabi's corniche. At the meeting, the company's budget was boosted by nearly a fifth to increase oil and gas production capacity and to snap up assets in chemicals, gas and clean energy across the globe. Since then the flow of bankers from around the world to Adnoc's doorstep has surged, with some even proposing what would have been an audacious move for oil major RP Pic, according to people familiar with the matter. While the BP idea never advanced. Adnoc continues to be among the most aggressive companies in searching for energy deals. according to the people. Despite this sharp appetite for growth and abundance of oil riches, the Middle Eastern producer has -like many of the wealthy entities around the Gulf-so far struggled to close a big international deal. The Covestro transaction has itself stretched on for a year and could still fall through. But a successful close would offer credibility to Abu Dhabi's ability to execute sophisticated cross border acquisitions and provide impetus for even bigger deals, people familiar with the Gulf company said. "This is also a matter of prestige," said Ben Cahill, who covers Gull fail producers as a senior fellow with Washington based Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Adnoc wants to operate like an international energy company with a global presence. The Middle East states are using M&A to diversify their economies from oil, but they've had mixed success so far. They have looked beyond trophy as sets like sports clubs and luxury properties to buy into industries that can help spur growth at home. Still, the transition from portfolio investors to owners hasn't been smooth with deals like Abu Dhabi's pursuit of Standard Chartered falling through and outright acquisitions have been few. The Covestro deal has also seen a stream of hurdles over the past year. When Adnoc's interest first became known. Covestro's CEO showed little support, publicly saying that the German industry should get more backing at home. The deal appeared to stall until this month, when Adnoc offered to raise Its bid should due diligence go well. Covestro's CEO Markus Steilemann and Khaled Salmeen, the head of Adnoc's refining, chemicals and trading businesses, developed a relationship that has helped talks to progress according to people familiar with the matter. The chances of a deal going through have now risen as Covestro has agreed to concrete negotiations and opened up its books. Adnoc and Covestro declined to comment. Adnoc's race for assets is being led by Chief Executive Officer Sultan al-Jaber, who also heads the UN'S annual climate conference which the UAE hosted last year. He's overseen the creation of a team to look at strategic investments that includes former bankers and industry experts. (Gulf Times)
- **UAE seeks opportunities for private sector at US summit -** A UAE delegation explored expanding opportunities for its private sector at the 10th SelectUSA Investment Summit, an event that promotes and facilitates business investment in the US, which took place from June 23-26, in Maryland, US. Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, who led the UAE delegation to the summit, also visited Washington for talks with Gina Raimondo, US Secretary of Commerce, to discuss strengthening bilateral trade and investment ties. Dr Al Zeyoudi reaffirmed the importance of economic relations with the US, which is the UAE's third-largest global trade partner and accounts for 27% of America's non-oil trade with the Arab World, at the meeting. In 2023, the two nations shared bilateral trade worth $40bn, a 20.1% increase on the previous year and 50.2% growth compared to 2019. The pair discussed areas of mutual interest, including the ongoing collaboration on renewable energy development. At the SelectUSA Investment Summit, which is hosted by the US Department of Commerce and brings together public officials and corporate leaders, Al Zeyoudi also met Governor Phil Murphy of New Jersey to discuss how UAE-based businesses, investors and family offices can either enter or expand their presence in the US market in areas of mutual interest, such as clean energy, logistics, infrastructure development and advanced technology. The summit's workshops and seminars also enabled the delegation to learn about the various investment opportunities across the USA, enabling them to identify potential areas for collaboration and the means to access them. Addressing attendees from the US business community at a session organized by the UAE-US Business Council, Al Zeyoudi, said: "Our visit to the US is a reflection of our commitment to finding new avenues of cooperation and to building partnerships at the public- and private-sector levels that further our economic diversification ambitions. "SelectUSA is not only the ideal platform to discover the opportunities in the US market but to also to showcase the dynamism of the UAE's

ecosystem, which is already home to more than 1,500 US companies." The UAE is the largest Arab investor in the USA with assets of more than $38.1bn, accounting for over 50% of Arab investment into the country as of 2022. UAE investments in the US over the last five years have grown by $12bn across a variety of sectors with a focus on transportation, business services and ICT. Majority UAE-owned firms employ over 24,300 US workers and help to increase US exports, contributing $1.4bn to the value of US goods exported in 2021. (Zawya)

- **Al Zeyoudi visits Silicon Valley to strengthen UAE-US ties in technology, innovation sectors -** Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, has concluded a visit to San Francisco and nearby Silicon Valley, which was aimed at boosting economic cooperation and exploring partnerships between the UAE and the United States, especially in advanced technology. Dr. Thani held several discussions with stakeholders, leading technology companies, and local entrepreneurs, during which he sought to identify potential partnerships in high-priority fields such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and climate tech. In his meetings, the minister outlined the UAE's advanced technology ambitions and investment-friendly business environment, extending an invitation to US investors, start-ups, and skilled professionals to explore its expansion opportunities. Discussions focused on joint projects, research collaboration, and exchanging knowledge and expertise in cutting-edge disciplines such as AI, data analytics and sustainable technologies. Dr. Al Zeyoudi's visit to the US underlines the UAE's commitment to securing global partnerships to accelerate its industrial and technological capabilities, and to further bolstering the nation's position as a destination for investment and innovation. Of the visit, the minister remarked, "The West Coast of the US is the global epicenter of technology and innovation, and the UAE has much to gain from closer ties to Silicon Valley's vibrant ecosystem. This visit is an important part of our efforts to establish long-standing partnerships at both the private-sector, public-sector and academic levels to leverage their knowledge and experience and accelerate the UAE's technological capabilities. Technology is a key pillar of our economic growth and diversification agenda and it's vital we can build productive and mutually beneficial relations with the world's leading exponents." The United States is the UAE's third-largest trading partner globally, accounting for 5.6% of the UAE's total non-oil trade. The UAE is America's most important trading partner in the Arab World, with bilateral trade comprising 27% of the USA's non-oil trade with the region. In terms of investments, the UAE has $38.1bn in assets in the US, which is more than 50% of the total FDI from Arab countries in America at the end of 2022. These investments are mainly in transportation, business services, software and IT services, real estate, food and beverages, and aerospace. (Zawya)
- **UAE: MoHRE sets June 30 deadline for meeting Emiratization targets -** The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE) confirmed 30th June as the final deadline for meeting Emiratization targets for the first half of 2024. These targets aim for a 1% growth in UAE citizens in skilled jobs at companies with 50 or more employees in accordance with the Council of Ministers decisions. In a press statement, the ministry explained that starting from 1st July, it will begin verifying the level of compliance among companies in terms of meeting their required targets before imposing the corresponding financial contributions to non-compliant establishments. The ministry also commended companies that have achieved the required growth, emphasizing the necessity of registering Emirati citizens in a pension fund and the Wage Protection System (WPS). It called on these establishments to ensure that the growth rates they have achieved are maintained by 30th June. The ministry reiterated its confidence in companies' ability to fulfil their commitments in light of the rapid economic growth transforming the UAE across all business sectors, noting that the recruitment of UAE citizens in private sector jobs has added significant value to the business sector. Furthermore, the ministry urged companies that have yet to meet their targets to take advantage of the Nafis Program's digital platform, which allows them access to a wide pool of qualified Emirati job seekers across various specializations. (Zawya)
- **SCA signs MoU with Tajikistan's securities agency -** The Securities and Commodities Authority (SCA) announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Agency for Securities Market Development and Specialized Registration at the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan. The MoU aligns with efforts to enhance international cooperation in the field of oversight and supervision and improve the transparency and efficiency of financial markets in both countries. The agreement was signed at the SCA headquarters in Abu Dhabi by Dr. Maryam Butti Al Suwaidi, CEO of SCA, and Nigina Abdurakhmanova, Director of Tajikistan's Agency for Securities Market Development and Specialized Registration, in the presence of Sharifi Bahadur Mahmoudzadeh, Ambassador of Tajikistan to the UAE, along with several officials from both sides. Dr. Maryam Butti Al Suwaidi, CEO of the Authority, said, "The signing of this MoU is a major stride towards boosting our cooperation with the Republic of Tajikistan. It reflects our commitment to broadening our international collaboration horizons in various fields and our dedication to achieving shared goals aimed at building a safe and stable investment environment that benefits investors and drives economic development in both countries." Under the MoU, the two parties will collaborate to enforce applicable legislation and regulations on jointly listed companies in their respective financial markets. The agreement also provides for handling complaints and reports from investors regarding unlicensed and shell entities, mutual coordination on investigations into violations related to transactions in securities markets, and the practices of non-compliant financial services companies. Additionally, it provides for implementing joint training programs to enhance the efficiency and performance of licensed individuals. (Zawya)
- **AD Ports Group, International Trade Centre sign deal to enhance trade facilitation initiatives -** AD Ports Group and the International Trade Centre (ITC), the joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to cooperate on trade facilitation, digital trade, logistics and transport through policy dialogue, digital trade solutions, capacity building, experience sharing and technical assistance. The agreement was signed by Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, Managing Director and Group CEO, AD Ports Group, and Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, ITC. Under the MoU, the two entities will use various solutions to simplify trade, improving the efficiency of the transport, maritime, ports and logistics sectors in the United Arab Emirates, countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and developing countries. Both parties will review frameworks and policies across these sectors to evaluate their effectiveness and develop and upgrade border services in line with international best practices. AD Ports Group and ITC will provide technical assistance for developing and least developed countries (LDCs), including on the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) for faster and smoother cross-border trade. The cooperation will also see AD Ports Group and ITC make trade more inclusive and conducive to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), while fostering dialogue and consensus-building. Both sides will provide advisory support to design SMEs-led trade strategies and business solutions and promote women traders' role in trade facilitation with empowerment programs and initiatives. The parties will then promote joint services and solutions and jointly participate in events, conferences and workshops in customs digitalization, trade facilitation, ports, maritime and logistics. Furthermore, they will share experiences, networks, capacity building and training on key areas of trade facilitation and customs excellence. Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, Managing Director and Group CEO, AD Ports Group, said, "We're extremely excited to be the first ports and logistics entity to sign such an MoU with ITC, demonstrating AD Ports Group's value proposition. This move strengthens our relationships with international trade organizations, opens new global investment opportunities, and promotes the United Arab Emirates' economic diversification in line with our wise leadership's vision. Our cooperation with ITC in the area of trade facilitation services and solutions will make transactions smoother, enabling us to integrate more small businesses into value chains and improve our overall efficiency. ITC shares our value and stance regarding sustainability and we're fully confident that by working together we can help each other reach our environmental goals." (Zawya)

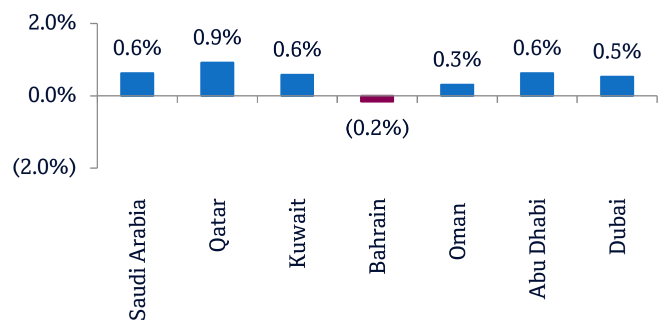
- **Ajman Chamber promotes investment opportunities at 2024 'SelectUSA Investment Summit' -** The Ajman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) participated in the 2024 "SelectUSA Investment Summit" held in Maryland, USA. This major event attracted over 4,000 participants from various countries, creating a valuable platform for international collaboration. Sheikh Sultan bin Saqer Al Nuaimi, Second Vice Chairman of ACCI, highlighted the summit's focus on discussing the latest trends and opportunities in technology and artificial intelligence (AI). ACCI joined the UAE delegation under the umbrella of the Federation of UAE Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) with several key objectives. By showcasing the emirate's unique advantages to a global audience, the chamber hoped to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) that would contribute to Ajman's economic growth. Additionally, participation in the summit allowed ACCI to develop a stronger global economic network and build new connections with international entities. Furthermore, ACCI sought to explore partnerships with participating countries and entities to drive economic development for all parties involved. Al Nuaimi emphasized that the summit emphasized collaboration and investment in various specialized fields, including technology services, AI, product development, advanced industries, education, and renewable energy. These areas align perfectly with Ajman's goals for economic development, making the summit a particularly relevant platform for the chamber. The summit also served as a valuable platform for fostering international collaboration. The participation of government officials, major companies, and private sector institutions facilitated the exploration of cooperation and partnership opportunities. Additionally, it provided a space for exchanging valuable experiences, particularly with US entities, allowing ACCI to gain insights that can be implemented within Ajman. Al Nuaimi further highlighted that Ajman can showcase its unique advantages as an investment destination by actively engaging with the international community, leading to increased economic activity and prosperity. He added that the Ajman Chamber met with US officials and business owners to boost trade between Ajman and the US and discussed holding future meetings and events to explore promising trade opportunities. (Zawya)
- **Oman to bolster energy, minerals contributions to GDP -** The Ministry of Energy and Minerals is planning to enhance with the support of technology the contribution of the energy and mineral sectors to the gross domestic product (GDP), and add to the national income of Oman, a report said. It said that it has achieved strong results in 2023 and wants to supplement the state's general budget by using all possible means to boost production at lower cost using the latest technology, Times of Oman said. Engineer Salem bin Nasser Al-Awfi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, stressed that the ministry is working to harness all capabilities and resources to enhance its role in developing the energy and minerals sectors, and use advanced technology to support the production of crude oil and oil condensates. The minister further explained that the Ministry of Energy and Minerals continued its efforts in the field of localization of industries in 2023. A factory for manufacturing chemicals within the Sultanate of Oman has been certified and approved in accordance with the required standards and specifications, which will contribute directly to enhancing the local value, in addition to achieving a reduction in operational expenses. The first well drilling rig manufactured in Oman with an electronic operation feature was also completed, as it was manufactured using the latest technologies to ensure safe, efficient and sustainable drilling operations. He pointed out that in line with the government's directions in supporting the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to contribute to achieving economic and social development, the total spending on small and medium enterprises in the oil and gas sectors amounted to about 16% of the total value of purchases and tenders. Regarding the important projects that were started in 2023, Engineer Salem bin Nasser Al-Awfi pointed to the Al-Ghaisin Mine Copper Mining Project in the Wilayat of Al-Khaboura. It is one of the most important and promising projects in copper mining that will contribute to enhancing economic diversification in the Sultanate of Oman. It relies on modern, environmentally friendly underground mining techniques and its reserve is estimated at more than 6mn tonnes with an average concentration of 2.04% copper ore. Also, a solar energy station was opened in the Wilayat of Sur to produce renewable energy for the Sur water desalination plant. He stressed that the ministry has made tangible efforts in the field of social responsibility with its partners as three national projects were supported by three different companies at a cost of OMR2.5mn. (Zawya)
- **Bahrain national non-oil exports fall 12% to $838.3mn in May -** Bahrain's non-oil exports of products of national origin fell 12% to BD316mn ($838.3mn) in May 2024, compared to BD360mn for May 2023. The top 10 countries in exports (National Origin) accounted for 73% of the exports (National Origin) value. Saudi Arabia ranked first among countries for the non-oil exports (National Origin) with BD64mn (20%). The US was second with BD34mn (11%) and the UAE third with BD31mn (10%), Bahrain's Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA) said in its Foreign Trade report. Unwrought Aluminum Alloys were the top products exported with BD93mn (30%), followed by Agglomerated Iron Ores and Concentrates Alloyed at BD59mn (19%) and Aluminum Wire not Alloyed at BD20mn (6%). Non-oil re-exports: The total value of non-oil Re-exports decreased by 28% to reach BD51mn in May 2024, compared to BD71mn for same month in 2023. The top 10 countries for Re-exports accounted for 88% of the re-exported value. The UAE ranked first with BD19mn (37%) followed by Saudi Arabia with BD15mn (29%) and Germany with BD2mn (4%). As per the report, Private Cars were the top product re-exported from Bahrain with a value of BD3.3mn (6.5%), followed by Four Wheel Drive BD3.1mn (6.1%), and Gold Ingots with BD3mn (6%). As per the report, the value of non-oil imports has decreased by 2% reaching BD466mn in May 2024 in comparison with BD475mn for same month in 2023. The top 10 countries for imports recorded 69% of the total value of imports. Imports to Bahrain: According to the report, China ranked first for imports to Bahrain, with a total of BD63mn (14%), followed by Brazil with BD47mn (10.1%) and Australia with 46mn (9.9%). Non-Agglomerated Iron Ores and Concentrates were the top product imported to Bahrain with a total value of BD51mn (11%), followed by Other Aluminum Oxide with BD40mn (9%) and Four-Wheel Drive third with BD15mn (3%). As for the Trade Balance, which represents the difference between exports and imports, the deficit recorded BD99mn in May 2024 compared to a deficit of BD43mn in May 2023. (Zawya)

Rebased Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Daily Index Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Asset/Currency Performance	Close ($)	1D%	WTD%	YTD%
Gold/Ounce	2,326.75	(0.0)	0.2	12.8
Silver/Ounce	29.14	0.6	(1.4)	22.5
Crude Oil (Brent)/Barrel (FM Future)	86.41	0.0	1.4	12.2
Crude Oil (WTI)/Barrel (FM Future)	81.54	(0.2)	1.0	13.8
Natural Gas (Henry Hub)/MMBtu	2.55	0.0	4.7	(1.2)
LPG Propane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	82.80	0.5	6.0	18.3
LPG Butane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	79.00	0.6	2.9	(21.4)
Euro	1.07	0.1	0.2	(3.0)
Yen	160.88	0.1	0.7	14.1
GBP	1.26	0.0	0.0	(0.7)
CHF	1.11	0.0	(0.5)	(6.4)
AUD	0.67	0.3	0.4	(2.1)
USD Index	105.87	(0.0)	0.1	4.5
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	3,511.78	(0.3)	0.1	10.8
DJ Industrial	39,118.86	(0.1)	(0.1)	3.8
S&P 500	5,460.48	(0.4)	(0.1)	14.5
NASDAQ 100	17,732.60	(0.7)	0.2	18.1
STOXX 600	511.42	(0.1)	(0.5)	3.4
DAX	18,235.45	0.2	0.6	5.4
FTSE 100	8,164.12	(0.3)	(0.9)	4.6
CAC 40	7,479.40	(0.6)	(1.7)	(4.0)
Nikkei	39,583.08	0.5	1.7	3.6
MSCI EM	1,086.25	0.4	(0.1)	6.1
SHANGHAI SE Composite	2,967.40	0.8	(1.1)	(2.5)
HANG SENG	17,718.61	0.0	(1.8)	4.0
BSE SENSEX	79,032.73	(0.2)	2.6	9.2
Bovespa	123,906.55	(1.1)	(0.3)	(19.5)
RTS	1,127.16	0.1	(0.9)	4.0

Source: Bloomberg ($ adjusted returns if any)*

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