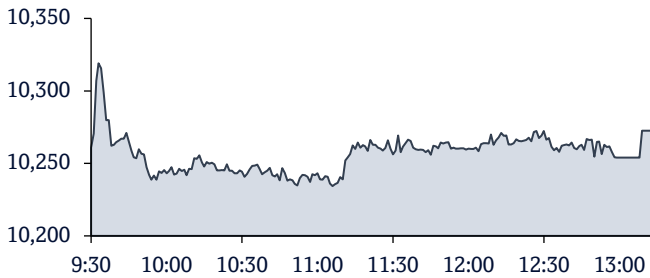


QSE Intra-Day Movement



Qatar Commentary

The QE Index rose 0.4% to close at 10272.5. Gains were led by the Insurance and Telecoms indices, gaining 1.5% and 0.7%, respectively. Top gainers were National Leasing and Gulf International Services, rising 6.7% and 3.6%, respectively. Among the top losers, Ahli Bank fell 6.9%, while Inma Holding was down 2.8%.

GCC Commentary

Saudi Arabia: The TASI Index fell 0.5% to close at 10849.1. Losses were led by the Diversified Financials and Media & Entertainment indices, falling 1.6% and 1.3%, respectively. Middle East Specialized Cables Co. declined 5.3%, while Al-Baha Investment and Development Co. was down 4.9%.

Dubai: The DFM Index gained 1.0% to close at 3,444.2. The Consumer Discretionary index rose 1.5%, while the Industrials index gained 1.2%. Amlak Finance rose 15.0% while Al Firdous Holdings was up 10.2%.

Abu Dhabi: The ADX General Index gained 0.1% to close at 9511.0. The Health Care index rose 1.4%, while the Basic Materials index gained 0.4%. Gulf Cement rose 7.5% while Rak Bank was up 5.0%.

Kuwait: The Kuwait All Share Index gained 1.0% to close at 6,903.7. The Real Estate index rose 1.8%, while the Industrials index gained 1.5%. The Energy House Holding Company rose 13.3%, while National Cleaning Co. was up 9.5%.

Oman: The MSM 30 Index gained 0.6% to close at 4,768.6. The Financial index gained 0.4%, while the other indices ended flat or in red. Voltamp Energy rose 9.6%, while Shell Oman Marketing was up 4.4%.

Bahrain: The BHB Index fell 0.2% to close at 1,881.0. The Real Estate declined 1.5% while the Materials index fell 0.7%. Bahrain Islamic Bank declined 2.4% while Seef Properties was down 1.9%.

Market Indicators	11 Apr 23	10 Apr 23	%Chg.
Value Traded (QR mn)	390.7	266.2	46.8
Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn)	597,451.8	596,742.5	0.1
Volume (mn)	146.7	93.7	56.6
Number of Transactions	14,229	9,038.0	57.4
Companies Traded	49	48	2.1
Market Breadth	29:14	12:32	-

Market Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	YTD%	TTM P/E
Total Return	22,046.27	0.4	(0.7)	0.8	12.2
All Share Index	3,438.26	0.4	(0.6)	0.7	133.6
Banks	4,311.96	0.3	(0.7)	(1.7)	12.2
Industrials	4,028.38	0.2	(0.7)	6.5	11.9
Transportation	4,173.71	0.3	(0.9)	(3.7)	11.9
Real Estate	1,473.12	0.3	(0.5)	(5.6)	16.7
Insurance	1,993.84	1.5	2.8	(8.8)	16.2
Telecoms	1,487.55	0.7	(0.1)	12.8	53.2
Consumer Goods and Services	7,809.17	0.5	(1.4)	(1.3)	21.3
Al Rayan Islamic Index	4,574.62	0.5	(0.6)	(0.4)	8.7

GCC Top Gainers**	Exchange	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Agility Public Warehousing	Kuwait	0.59	3.4	5,747.1	(18.8)
Bank Dhofar	Oman	0.16	3.2	4.3	(8.6)
National Bank of Oman	Oman	0.27	3.1	157.4	(7.3)
Mabane Co.	Kuwait	0.74	2.6	340.2	(7.6)
National Marine Dredging Co	Abu Dhabi	24.60	2.5	2,269.9	0.5

GCC Top Losers**	Exchange	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Arabian Contracting Services	Saudi Arabia	146.00	(2.7)	179.8	29.7
Saudi Research & Media	Saudi Arabia	202.40	(1.7)	76.0	11.2
Bank Al-Jazira	Saudi Arabia	18.58	(1.5)	2,091.8	(2.6)
Nahdi Medical Co	Saudi Arabia	174.00	(1.5)	179.8	4.1
Rabigh Refining & Petro.	Saudi Arabia	10.72	(1.5)	2,639.9	0.4

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%
National Leasing	0.717	6.7	15,600.5	1.8
Gulf International Services	1.950	3.6	17,221.3	33.7
Qatar Insurance Company	1.767	2.7	374.0	(8.1)
Qatar German Co for Med. Devices	1.032	2.5	9,382.0	(17.9)
Qatar International Islamic Bank	9.940	1.4	1,744.4	(4.4)

QSE Top Volume Trades	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Gulf International Services	1.950	3.6	17,221.3	33.7
National Leasing	0.717	6.7	15,600.5	1.8
Estithmar Holding	2.114	0.7	14,616.0	17.4
Dukhaan Bank	3.397	0.7	12,380.8	0.0
Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co.	1.541	0.1	10,825.2	1.4

QSE Top Losers	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Ahli Bank	3.910	(6.9)	184.5	(2.5)
Inma Holding	3.680	(2.8)	225.2	(10.5)
Zad Holding Company	14.83	(2.7)	80.7	6.7
Mekdam Holding Group	5.630	(1.6)	111.4	(18.5)
Doha Insurance Group	1.950	(1.3)	25.0	(1.5)

QSE Top Value Trades	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Dukhaan Bank	3.397	0.7	41,931.6	0.0
Gulf International Services	1.950	3.6	33,593.0	33.7
QNB Group	16.08	(0.4)	31,679.2	(10.7)
Estithmar Holding	2.114	0.7	31,084.1	17.4
Qatar Navigation	8.650	0.8	24,993.1	(14.8)

Regional Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%	Exch. Val. Traded (\$ mn)	Exchange Mkt. Cap. (\$ mn)	P/E**	P/B**	Dividend Yield
Qatar*	10,272.52	0.4	(0.7)	0.6	(3.8)	106.82	163,343.3	12.2	1.3	4.8
Dubai	3,444.22	1.0	0.9	1.1	3.2	96.15	165,480.0	9.9	1.2	3.9
Abu Dhabi	9,510.98	0.1	0.4	0.9	(6.9)	286.08	713,772.3	23.1	2.6	1.8
Saudi Arabia	10,849.05	(0.5)	(0.5)	2.4	3.5	1,361.28	2,700,590.5	17.1	2.2	3.1
Kuwait	6,903.73	1.0	(0.9)	(2.1)	(5.3)	88.09	144,613.9	16.5	1.5	4.1
Oman	4,768.55	0.6	0.3	(1.9)	(1.8)	8.80	22,613.4	14.5	1.0	4.4
Bahrain	1,881.00	(0.2)	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.8)	4.18	64,399.9	6.0	0.6	9.2

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 0.4% to close at 10,272.5. The Insurance and Telecoms indices led the gains. The index rose on the back of buying support from non-Qatari shareholders despite selling pressure from Qatari shareholders.
- National Leasing and Gulf International Services were the top gainers, rising 6.7% and 3.6%, respectively. Among the top losers, Ahli Bank fell 6.9%, while Inma Holding was down 2.8%.
- Volume of shares traded on Tuesday rose by 56.6% to 146.7mn from 93.7mn on Monday. Further, as compared to the 30-day moving average of 141mn, volume for the day was 4% higher. Gulf International Services and National Leasing were the most active stocks, contributing 11.7% and 10.6% to the total volume, respectively.

Overall Activity	Buy %*	Sell %*	Net (QR)
Qatari Individuals	31.23%	30.23%	3,911,684.94
Qatari Institutions	35.46%	43.93%	(33,058,839.41)
Qatari	66.69%	74.15%	(29,147,154.46)
GCC Individuals	0.72%	0.13%	2,323,906.91
GCC Institutions	2.53%	0.78%	6,831,605.70
GCC	3.25%	0.90%	9,155,512.61
Arab Individuals	12.21%	11.41%	3,139,449.64
Arab Institutions	0.00%	0.00%	-
Arab	12.21%	11.41%	3,139,449.64
Foreigners Individuals	3.21%	2.36%	3,312,751.91
Foreigners Institutions	14.64%	11.17%	13,539,440.30
Foreigners	17.85%	13.54%	16,852,192.21

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

Earnings Releases, Earnings Calendar and Global Economic Data

Earnings Releases

Company	Market	Currency	Revenue (mn) 1Q 2023	% Change YoY	Operating Profit (mn) 1Q 2023	% Change YoY	Net Profit (mn) 1Q 2023	% Change YoY
Phoneix Power Co.	Oman	OMR	22.81	10.7%	NA	NA	(4.4)	N/A
Saudi Arabian Amiantit Co.	Saudi Arabia	SR	197.45	65.2%	15.5	346.3%	2.0	N/A
Oman Cables	Oman	OMR	45.90	-7.0%	NA	NA	3.3	105.7%
Musandam Power Co.	Oman	OMR	2.44	-0.1%	NA	NA	(0.8)	N/A
Barka Water and Power	Oman	OMR	3.16	-28.5%	NA	NA	0.2	65.5%
Gulf Hotels	Oman	OMR	2.19	27.4%	NA	NA	0.4	161.4%
Oman Cables	Oman	OMR	45.90	-7.0%	NA	NA	3.3	105.7%

Earnings Calendar

Tickers	Company Name	Date of reporting 1Q2023 results	No. of days remaining	Status
QFLS	Qatar Fuel Company	12-Apr-23	0	Due
BRES	Barwa Real Estate Company	12-Apr-23	0	Due
QFBQ	Lesha Bank	12-Apr-23	0	Due
FALH	Al Faleh Educational Holding	13-Apr-23	1	Due
MRDS	Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Development	13-Apr-23	1	Due
QGTS	Qatar Gas Transport Company Limited (Nakilat)	16-Apr-23	4	Due
QEWS	Qatar Electricity & Water Company	16-Apr-23	4	Due
QIGD	Qatari Investors Group	17-Apr-23	5	Due
CBQK	The Commercial Bank	17-Apr-23	5	Due
MARK	Masraf Al Rayan	17-Apr-23	5	Due
QIIK	Qatar International Islamic Bank	17-Apr-23	5	Due
IHGS	Inma Holding	18-Apr-23	6	Due
ABQK	Ahli Bank	18-Apr-23	6	Due
MCGS	Medicare Group	18-Apr-23	6	Due
QNCD	Qatar National Cement Company	18-Apr-23	6	Due
VFQS	Vodafone Qatar	18-Apr-23	6	Due
QNNS	Qatar Navigation (Milaha)	18-Apr-23	6	Due
MERS	Al Meera Consumer Goods Company	18-Apr-23	6	Due
ERES	Ezdan Holding Group	19-Apr-23	7	Due
QIMD	Qatar Industrial Manufacturing Company	19-Apr-23	7	Due
UDCD	United Development Company	19-Apr-23	7	Due
SIIS	Salam International Investment Limited	19-Apr-23	7	Due
QATR	Al Rayan Qatar ETF	19-Apr-23	7	Due
MKDM	Mekdam Holding Group	20-Apr-23	8	Due
GWCS	Gulf Warehousing Company	27-Apr-23	15	Due
DHBK	Doha Bank	30-Apr-23	18	Due
QISI	Qatar Islamic Insurance	30-Apr-23	18	Due

Source: QSE

Global Economic Data

Date	Market	Source	Indicator	Period	Actual	Consensus	Previous
11-04	US	Nat'l Fed. of Ind. Business	NFIB Small Business Optimism	Mar	90.10	89.80	90.90
11-04	China	National Bureau of Statistics	CPI YoY	Mar	0.70%	1.00%	1.00%
11-04	China	National Bureau of Statistics	PPI YoY	Mar	-2.50%	-2.50%	-1.40%

Qatar

- QIBK posts 5.9% YoY increase but 21.6% QoQ decline in net profit in 1Q2023, misses our estimate** - Qatar Islamic Bank's (QIBK) net profit rose 5.9% YoY (but declined 21.6% on QoQ basis) to QR905.3mn in 1Q2023, missing our estimate of QR976.0mn (variation of -7.2%). Total net income from financing and investing activities increased 21.6% YoY and 1.9% QoQ in 1Q2023 to QR2,258.6mn. The company's total income came in at QR2,507.1mn in 1Q2023, which represents an increase of 18.4% YoY (+2.5% QoQ). The earnings per share amounted to QR0.38 in 1Q2023 as compared to EPS of QR0.36 in 1Q2022. (QNBFS, QSE)
- Baladna: The AGM endorses items on its agenda** - Baladna announces the results of the AGM. The meeting was held on 11/04/2023 and the following resolution were approved 1) The General Assembly approved the Chairman's report on the company's activities and the financial position for the financial year ended 31 December 2022, and the company's business plan for the year 2023. 2) The General Assembly approved the External Auditor's report on the company's Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022. 3) The General Assembly approved the company's consolidated and audited financial statements, for the financial year ended 31 December 2022, including the profit & loss, and balance sheet statements. 4) The General Assembly approved the Company's Corporate Governance Report and approved the Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2022 5) The General Assembly approved the proposal of the Board of Directors not to distribute dividends to its shareholders. 6) The General Assembly approved discharge the Board of Directors from any liability relating to their directorship duties and responsibilities for the financial year ended 31 December 2022 and approved not to pay bonus to the chairman and board of directors. 7) The General Assembly approved the appointment of Moore Stephens as the Company's auditors for the financial year 2023 and approved their fees as per the Board's recommendation. 8) The General Assembly approved the Board of Directors policies (dividend policy, board remuneration policy, and related party policy). 9) The General Assembly endorsed the Board of Directors decision to donate QR1mn to M/s. Qatar Charity, as a participation in the relief campaign for those affected by the earthquake that took place in Turkey and Syria. (QSE)
- Ezdan Holding Group: The AGM endorses items on its agenda** - Ezdan Holding Group announces the results of the AGM. The meeting was held on 11/04/2023 and the following resolutions were approved 1) The report of the Board of Directors on the Company's activities, financial position for the year ended 31 December 2022 and the future plan of the Company for 2023. 2) The report of the External Auditors on the Company's Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022 3) The financial position and statement for profit or loss statement of the Group for the year ended 31 December 2022 4) BOD's recommendation of no dividend payout. 5) The Corporate Governance Report for 2022 6) The auditors' report on the requirements of Article (24) of the Governance Code for Companies and Legal Entities Listed on the Main Market, issued pursuant to Qatar Financial Markets Authority Resolution No. (5)/2016. 7) Discharge the liability of the members of the Board of Directors for the financial year ended 31/12/2022, and no bonus for members of Board of Directors due to no dividend payout. 8) Adopting some policies that were prepared in accordance with the requirements of the governance system, which are (Remuneration Policy - Related Party Transactions Policy) 9) Appointing MAZARS Company as an External Auditor for the Company (For the year 2023). (QSE)
- Ooredoo announces date to pay interest to bondholders** - Ooredoo Q.P.S.C. announces that Ooredoo International Finance Limited (OIFL), its wholly owned subsidiary, pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Notes and the Final Terms, will pay its Global Medium-Term Note (GMTN) holders' interest payment on 19 April 2023. Below is the announcement in full: \$750,000,000 @ 5.00%. Guaranteed Notes due 19 October 2025 (ISIN Code: 144 A- US74733LAE20, Reg S - XS0551307100) (the "Notes") Issued by Ooredoo International Finance Limited (the "Issuer") The Issuer a wholly owned subsidiary of Ooredoo Q.P.S.C hereby gives notice that pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Notes and the Final Terms, it will pay Noteholders \$18,750,000.00 on the Interest Payment Date falling due on 19 April 2023. Terms defined in this Notice shall have the meaning given to them in the Terms and Conditions of the Notes and the Final Terms. This Notice is given by Ooredoo International Finance Limited. (QSE)
- Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Company discloses the date and agenda of Ordinary General Assembly Meeting for the year 2022** - Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Company discloses the date and agenda of its annual Ordinary General Assembly meeting for the year 2022, scheduled to be held virtually (through "Zoom" application) on Sunday, 07 May 2023 at 06:30 PM. In case the required quorum is not met, the second meeting will be held on Tuesday 16 May 2023 at the same time. The Meeting Registration in person (self or proxy) at Company's headquarter in area 4, Musheirib, Street 880, Building No. 23, starting from 05:00 PM till 06:00 PM, in case the required quorum is not met, the registration for second meeting will be at same time and place. Agenda of the Ordinary General Assembly: 1) Hearing, Discussing and approving the Board of Director's Report on the Company's activities and its financial position for the financial year ended 31st December 2022 and the Company's future plan; 2) Hearing and approving the External Auditor's Report for the financial year ended 31st December 2022; 3) Discussing and approving the Company's Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss accounts for the financial year ended 31st December 2022; 4) Approving the Board of Director's proposal not distribute dividends for the financial year ended 31st December 2022; 5) Discharging the Members of the Board from liability for the financial year ended 31st December 2022 and approving not distribute remuneration to the board members; 6) Discussing and adopting the Company's Corporate Governance Report for the year 2022; 7) Appointing the Company's external Auditors for the financial year 2023 and approving their fees. (QSE)
- Mazaya Real Estate Development Q.P.S.C. to hold its investors relation conference call on April 18 to discuss the financial results** - Mazaya Real Estate Development Q.P.S.C. announces that the conference call with the Investors to discuss the financial results for the Quarter 1 2023 will be held on 18/04/2023 at 02:00 PM, Doha Time. (QSE)
- Aamal to disclose its Quarter 1 financial results on April 19** - Aamal discloses its financial statement for the period ending 31st March 2023 on 19/04/2023. (QSE)
- Aamal holds its investors relation conference call on April 20 to discuss the financial results** - Aamal announces that the conference call with the Investors to discuss the financial results for the Quarter 1 2023 will be held on 20/04/2023 at 02:00 PM, Doha Time. (QSE)
- Vodafone Qatar P.Q.S.C. to hold its investors relation conference call on April 19 to discuss the financial results** - Vodafone Qatar P.Q.S.C. announces that the conference call with the Investors to discuss the financial results for the Quarter 1 2023 will be held on 19/04/2023 at 12:30 PM, Doha Time. (QSE)

- **Al Meera Consumer Goods Company to hold its investors relation conference call on April 19 to discuss the financial results** - Al Meera Consumer Goods Company announces that the conference call with the Investors to discuss the financial results for the Quarter 1 2023 will be held on 19/04/2023 at 11:30 AM, Doha Time. (QSE)
- **Gulf Warehousing Co. to disclose its Quarter 1 financial results on April 27** - Gulf Warehousing Co. to disclose its financial statement for the period ending 31st March 2023 on 27/04/2023. (QSE)
- **Mekdam Holding Group to hold its investors relation conference call on April 30 to discuss the financial results** - Mekdam Holding Group announces that the conference call with the Investors to discuss the financial results for the Quarter 1 2023 will be held on 30/04/2023 at 01:30 PM, Doha Time. (QSE)
- **UCC Qatar, Al-Suwaidi Electric Egypt to implement Libyan power project** - UCC Holding Qatar and Al-Suwaidi Electric Egypt have signed a contract to build a 1,044MW power plant for the Libyan General Electricity Company. The €1.19bn project, to be completed in 26 months, is being implemented by UCC Holding's UrbaCon Trading & Contracting, Estithmar's affiliate. The project comes as part of the international expansion strategy of the company ranked 105 globally and first in the Arab world and Africa, according to Engineering News-Record. (Gulf Times)
- **Ooredoo launches cloud-based unified communications offering with Webex by Cisco** - Ooredoo launched Tuesday Cloud PABX, the latest cloud-based unified communications solution, with Webex by Cisco. Ooredoo Cloud PABX is a collaboration solution with key features that support business continuity and strengthen customer offerings for secure and scalable unified communications. It works over Ooredoo Business fiber broadband and includes several options for Ooredoo business customers, including fixed mobile convergence, unified messaging, call control services, and voice and video conferencing, as well as integrations with Webex Calling and Webex Meeting, Microsoft Teams, and Cisco and Yealink IP phones. With this new solution, Ooredoo's customers can be reached regardless of their location or device, manage their telephone service, and enjoy the flexibility of working anywhere while remaining connected to their clients and colleagues. Thani al-Malki, chief business officer at Ooredoo, said: "In pursuit of our goal of upgrading our customers' worlds, we have a strategic commitment to investment in innovation and technology, and to finding, establishing, and developing partnerships with the world's leading technology and innovation providers. "Ooredoo Cloud PABX with Webex is an excellent example of both commitments and our collaboration will enable our business customers to upgrade their worlds by simplifying and unifying their communications." Hasan Khan, general manager, Cisco Qatar, said: "We are pleased to collaborate with Ooredoo to deliver Cloud PABX with Webex by Cisco. This solution will help enable Ooredoo to offer small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) a more complete solution with our inclusive Webex technology, addressing the communication needs of SMBs and helping them thrive in a hybrid work world." Ooredoo Cloud PABX with Webex will be available in three distinct packages: Standard Enterprise, Advance, and UC-One Premium. Customers can also mix and match add-ons to create the package that best suits their business's needs. (Gulf Times)
- **Qatar Tax agency announces extended deadline for 2022 corporate, individual income tax e-filing** - The Qatari Public Revenues and Tax Department April 2 announced the May 31 extended electronic filing deadline for 2022 corporate and individual income tax returns, through the Dhareeba tax portal. The deadline extension doesn't apply to petroleum and petrochemical companies, or taxpayers with accounting periods other than the default 12-month calendar year. (Bloomberg)
- **Moody's: Qatari banks record higher net earnings, improved efficiency in 2022; capital level remains strong** - Qatari banks' net earnings grew in 2022, driven by widening net interest margins and higher non-interest income, according to Moody's, an international credit rating agency. Moreover, the banks saw improved operating efficiency and their capital levels remained strong, even as loan-loss provisioning increased and is likely to remain elevated, Moody's said in a report. Qatari banks' combined net profit rose 8% for 2022 to QR23.4bn, as higher operating income more

than offset a jump in provisioning costs. This performance factored in hyperinflationary accounting adjustments linked to Turkiye for two Qatari banks that have subsidiaries there. "Net profit growth was consistent across the banks (except one bank) largely because of an 18% increase in net interest income and 11% growth in noninterest income such as fees and commissions," it said. Finding that Qatari banks' operating income grew by 13% during 2022, supported by a rise in both net interest income and noninterest income; Moody's said the interest rate environment reversed in 2022, driving aggregate growth of 18% in banks' net interest income. The growth reflected increasing asset yields, driven by rising interest rates, which more than offset higher funding costs, it said, adding while the banks' funding costs increased, they did not do so at the same rate. As a result, the banks' combined net interest margin rose to 2.3% from 2.1% a year earlier. "We expect margins to face modest pressure particularly in a scenario of rising global rates and banks being unable to reprice loans. Despite margin pressure, likely modest credit growth in 2023 of around 5% would support net interest income," it said. Highlighting that cost efficiency is strength and improved further; the rating agency said the banks continued to improve their operating efficiency during 2022 as income growth surpassed expenses growth. While the benefits of the cost control measures initiated during the pandemic accrued fully in 2021, aggregate operating expenses for the Qatari banking sector increased by 6% during 2022 and were almost at the same level as in 2019. Despite the modest increase in aggregate costs, the cost-to-income ratio for the rated banks fell to 22% during 2022 from 24% a year earlier and 25% for 2020. Moody's said the banks maintained their capital buffers during the year, supported by strong earnings and solid profit retention. Their combined tangible common equity remained broadly stable at a high 16% of total risk-weighted assets as of December 2022. "We expect solid profitability and modest credit growth to support capital buffers at the current high levels during 2023," it said. On loan-loss provisioning, the rating agency said the provisioning charges increased by 13% during 2022 and consumed around 33.1% of pre-provision income, compared with 35% in 2021 and 20% in 2019. The increase was primarily because of a jump in both Stage 2 and 3 loan balances as the banks' domestic operations continued to feel the effects of the Covid-19 disruption. The increase in provisioning costs was driven by an increase in both the nonperforming loan (NPL) ratio and increase in Stage 2 balances, with the aggregate problem loans ratio rising to 2.9% of total loans as of December 2022 from 2.2% as of December 2021. "We expect asset quality to weaken modestly as loans continue to migrate from Stage 1 to Stage 2 and to some extent Stage 3 during 2023," it said. (Gulf Times)

- **Alfardan Group partners with Aliz to offer Google cloud services in Qatar, Middle East region** - Alfardan Group has partnered with Aliz – a Google Cloud partner to drive the group's digital transformation and to represent its new business subsidiary offering digital services to businesses in Qatar and the wider Middle East region. The announcement was made by Omar Hussain Alfardan, president and chief executive officer of Alfardan Group, following a meeting with Istvan Boscha, chief executive officer of Aliz; Jean Claude Ghazi, country manager Aliz Qatar, and other officials at Alfardan Towers Tuesday. The partnership came as an offshoot of an agreement signed by Alfardan and Thomas Kurian, chief executive officer of Google Cloud on October 30, 2022, where the two entities agreed to combine synergies to revolutionize the group's business processes through implementing cloud technologies and to engage business and technology stakeholders to bring novelty and disruption to the company and the country. "We are in the era of digital revolution, which is at the center of the customer experience. As pioneers in Qatar to digitize our systems and processes, we are excited to join forces with Aliz – a leading global name in technology. Through this partnership, we have launched our new technology arm to help businesses in Qatar across the region benefit from the Google Cloud technologies," Alfardan said. Aliz is a Google Cloud partner with specializations in Data Analytics, Cloud Migration, and Machine Learning, a team of engineers, industry experts, and digital professionals and presence in multiple markets including Singapore, Germany, Indonesia, and Italy. It is represented in Qatar by Jean Claude Ghazi with an office in Qatar Free Zone. "This collaboration represents a significant milestone for both our organization, as it opens up new opportunities for growth and development in Qatar and the Middle East. We are confident that this joint venture will enable us to leverage

our expertise and experience to create innovative solutions and deliver exceptional value to our customers in the region," said Boscha. Alfaridan Group is a leading family conglomerate in Qatar and the region with a diverse portfolio of businesses ranging from Jewelry, exchange, properties and hospitality, automotive, investment, marine services, agriculture and medical. Being a pioneer to work on its digital transformation and launching its new technology arm, the group is continuing its expansion into new ventures and locations. (Gulf Times)

- **Amir issues decision on regulating real estate sector** - His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani issued yesterday Amiri Decision No. 28 of 2023 establishing the Public Authority for Regulating the Real Estate Sector. The decision is effective starting from the date of its issuance and is to be published in the official gazette. (Gulf Times)
- **Amir issues law to amend provisions** - His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani issued yesterday Law No. 5 of 2023 amending some provisions of Law No. 6 of 2014 regulating real estate development. The law is effective and is to be published in the official gazette. (Gulf Times)
- **Over 80% work for Expo 2023 Doha completed** - Over 80% development work for the International Horticultural Exhibition Expo 2023 Doha Qatar has been completed, said a top official. A huge facility spanning 1,700,000 sqm is being developed in Al Bidda Park in the heart of Doha to house Expo 2023 Doha. The six-month long event, scheduled to be held from October 2, 2023, to March 28, 2024, with the participation of over 80 countries, is expecting over 3mn visitors. "The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) is developing a facility to house Expo 2023 Doha. The facility is 80 complete," said Eng Fatima Al Abd Al Malik, Project Manager of Expo 2023 Doha at Ashghal. Speaking to The Peninsula on the sidelines of a recent event, she said that two technologies for greenery are being adopted for the Expo facility — the first one is the surrounded area called MSE wall and the second one is hydroponic structure. A Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) retaining wall is a composite structure consisting of alternating layers of compacted backfill and soil reinforcement elements, fixed to a wall facing. "These two technologies will help us in rationalization of water consumption for the greenery by reducing the temperature," said Al Malik. She said Ashghal is also developing pavilions for the participating countries from all over the world as well as a Qatari pavilion, the Netherlands' pavilion and VIPs pavilion at Expo 2023 Doha. "The Expo house building will be 12 meters in height, comprising ground floor plus two stories," said Al Malik. Secretary-General of the National Committee for hosting Expo 2023 Doha, Mohammed Ali Al Khouri in a presentation at a recent event said: "The Ministry of Municipality will organize the International Horticultural Exhibition Expo 2023 Doha Qatar from October 2, 2023, to March 28, 2024." He said that this huge global horticultural event, the first-of-its-kind in the GCC and MENA region will serve Qatar, GCC states and other desert countries. "A number of research works to combat desertification will be tabled during the expo. The theme of Expo 2023 Doha is "Green Desert, Better Environment", which aims to inspire and inform guests and the international community about innovative solutions to mitigate desertification," said Al Khouri. Expo 2023 Doha will introduce advanced techniques and solutions to boost the agriculture sector and to combat desertification for addressing climate change. Techniques that enable the sustainable cultivation of trees and crops in arid lands play an important role in reversing desertification, evident around the world. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Qatar's cultural heritage, attractions driving tourism** - Four months into post-World Cup Qatar 2022, visitors are keen to explore the cultural attractions and contemporary infrastructure of the country, according to travel industry officials. The Peninsula spoke to several travel experts to comprehend the sector's outlook in 2023 and how Qatar will target strong inbound leisure activities. "The local tourism sector will continue to face a positive outlook as Qatar Tourism Authority continues with their efforts to offer an array of activities and events even after the World Cup, which aims to target both local residents and inbound tourists," Lourdes Dolor, Marketing Manager at Darwish Travel Company, said. Expounding on the wide range of package deals the firm offers, Dolor said his company "couldn't be prouder to work with Qatar Tourism in promoting all the local events happening around Qatar by offering inbound tourism activities to

our clients as well as staycation packages to Qatar residents, especially for the upcoming Eid holidays." "Various activities such as dhow boat cruising, sand dune bashing, attraction tickets, etc. start at QR150, while we offer staycation packages starting at QR550 for families," she added. Qatar grew stronger in terms of tourism-related activities in 2023. The country is poised to be one of the most-visited leisure destinations in the GCC, and officials say the World Cup has put Qatar on the world map. Ahmed Atta, Sales, and Marketing Manager at Victoria Travels said: "The country's successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022 is expected to bring an influx of tourists eager to discover the cultural heritage, natural attractions, and modern infrastructures of Qatar. "While the travel agents in Qatar continue to remark on the list of bookings and entries to the country, Atta high-lighted: "Such a large increase in tourist numbers will contribute significantly to the growth and success of the tourism industry, with the added benefit of new hotels, amusements parks, and other tourist conveniences furthering the economic prosperity of the country." (Peninsula Qatar)

- **Labor Ministry aims to strengthen cooperation with ITF** - Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labor Mohammed Hassan Al Obaidly and Director of the Labor Office of the Permanent Delegation in Geneva, Mahmoud Al Siddiqi yesterday met with a delegation from the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). The meeting came within the framework of joint cooperation between the Ministry of Labor and the International Transport Workers' Federation and reviewing the memorandum of understanding and cooperation between the two parties, said the Ministry in a statement. The meeting, which took place in Istanbul, Turkiye, witnessed the discussion of a joint action plan for the current year, which includes enhancing occupational health and safety, combating human trafficking, promoting decent work, and ways to enhance cooperation between the two sides in the strategic partnership to implement future plans. The Ministry of Labor signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Transport Workers' Federation in 2017, as part of the activities related to the implementation of the technical cooperation program between the State of Qatar and the International Labor Organization. (Peninsula Qatar)

International

- **IMF warns deeper financial turmoil would slam global growth** - The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday trimmed its 2023 global growth outlook slightly as higher interest rates cool activity but warned that a severe flare-up of financial system turmoil could slash output to near recessionary levels. The IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook report that banking system contagion risks were contained by strong policy actions after the failures of two US regional banks and the forced merger of Credit Suisse. But the turmoil added another layer of uncertainty on top of stubbornly high inflation and spillovers from Russia's war in Ukraine. "With the recent increase in financial market volatility, the fog around the world economic outlook has thickened," the IMF said as it and the World Bank launch spring meetings this week in Washington. "Uncertainty is high and the balance of risks has shifted firmly to the downside so long as the financial sector remains unsettled," the Fund added. The IMF is now forecasting global real GDP growth at 2.8% for 2023 and 3.0% for 2024, marking a sharp slowdown from 3.4% growth in 2022 due to tighter monetary policy. Both the 2023 and 2024 forecasts were marked down by 0.1 percentage point from estimates issued in January, partly due to weaker performances in some larger economies as well as expectations of further monetary tightening to battle persistent inflation. The IMF's US outlook improved slightly, with growth in 2023 forecast at 1.6% versus 1.4% forecast in January as labor markets remain strong. But the Fund cut forecasts for some major economies including Germany, now forecast to contract 0.1% in 2023 and Japan, now forecast to grow 1.3% this year instead of 1.8% forecast in January. The IMF raised its 2023 core inflation forecast to 5.1%, from a 4.5% prediction in January, saying it had yet to peak in many countries despite lower energy and food prices. "Our advice is for monetary policy to remain focused on bringing down inflation," IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas told reporters. In a Reuters interview, Gourinchas said central banks should not halt their fight against inflation because of financial stability risks, which look "very much contained." While a major banking crisis was not in the IMF's baseline, Gourinchas

said a significant worsening of financial conditions “could result in a sharper and more elevated downturn.” The report included two analyses showing financial turmoil causing moderate and severe impacts on global growth. In a “plausible” scenario, stress on vulnerable banks - some like failed Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank burdened by unrealized losses due to monetary policy tightening and reliant on uninsured deposits - creates a situation where “funding conditions for all banks tighten, due to greater concern for bank solvency and potential exposures across the financial system,” the IMF said. This “moderate tightening” of financial conditions could slice 0.3 percentage point off of global growth for 2023, cutting it to 2.5%. The Fund also included a severe downside scenario with much broader impacts from bank balance sheet risks, leading to sharp cuts in lending in the US and other advanced economies, a major pullback in household spending and a “risk-off” flight of investment funds to safe-haven dollar-denominated assets. Emerging market economies would be hit hard by lower demand for exports, currency depreciation and a flare-up of inflation. This scenario could slash 2023 growth by as much as 1.8 percentage points, reducing it to 1.0% - a level that implies near-zero GDP growth per capita. The negative impact could be about one-quarter of the recessionary impact of the 2008-2009 financial crisis. Other downside risks highlighted by the IMF include persistently high inflation that requires more aggressive central bank rate hikes, escalation of Russia’s war in Ukraine, and setbacks in China’s recovery from COVID-19, including worsened difficulties in its real estate sector. The IMF forecasts do not include the impact of a recent oil output cut by OPEC+ countries that has caused oil prices to spike. It assumes an average 2023 global oil price of \$73 per barrel - well below Monday’s \$84 Brent crude futures price, but Gourinchas said it was unclear if this level could be sustained. For every 10% rise in the price of oil, IMF models show a 0.1 percentage point reduction in growth and a 0.3 percentage point increase in inflation, Gourinchas added. The IMF also now pegs global growth at 3% in 2028, its lowest five-year growth outlook since the WEO was first published in 1990, reflecting naturally slowing growth as some emerging economies mature, but also slower growth in workforce populations and fragmentation of the global economy along geopolitical lines, marked by US-China tensions and Russia’s war in Ukraine. (Reuters)

- Yellen: vigilant to downside economic risks, but don't 'overdo the negativism'** - US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on Tuesday said she remained vigilant to downside risks facing the global economy, given Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and banking pressures, but the overall outlook was "reasonably bright." Yellen, speaking at a news conference, pushed back against warnings by the International Monetary Fund of bigger risks associated with severe financial tensions. "I wouldn't overdo the negativism about the global economy," Yellen said, when asked about a slightly trimmed IMF global growth forecast for 2023 which warned that a flare-up of financial system turmoil could slash output to near recessionary levels. "I think we should be more positive." Yellen said she had not seen evidence suggesting a squeeze in credit after two US bank failures last month, although that was a possibility. She said the US banking system remained sound, with strong capital and liquidity positions, and the global financial system is resilient due to the significant reforms enacted after the 2008 financial crisis. "The US economy is obviously performing exceptionally well with continued solid job creation, inflation gradually moving down, robust consumer spending," she said. "So I'm not anticipating a downturn in the economy, although, of course, that remains a risk." Yellen told reporters the global economy was in a better place than projected last fall, with energy and food prices having stabilized and supply chain pressures continuing to ease. A price cap on Russian oil was helping to stabilize global energy markets while reducing Russia's primary source of revenue, she said, adding that ending the war would be the single biggest help for global economy. "Still, we remain vigilant to the downside risks," she said. Speaking at the start of a week of meetings at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, Yellen said the US labor market was strong, but inflation remained too high. She said Treasury was committed to working through global bodies like the Financial Stability Board and the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, while addressing vulnerabilities in nonbank financial institutions. (Reuters)

- Rightmove: UK house sales at pre-COVID levels after 'mini-budget' shock** - Property website Rightmove said the number of sales agreed between sellers and buyers was just 1% lower last month than in March 2019 as borrowing costs edged down from their leap after the September 'mini-budget'. "The market is remaining surprisingly robust given the economic headwinds that have affected movers over the last six months," Rightmove's property expert Tim Bannister said. However, while the total number of agreed sales had improved from being 21% below 2019 levels as recently as January, they remained down 18% when compared with March 2022. As well as Britain's high inflation rate, the country's housing market is facing the challenge posed by the Bank of England's run of interest rate increases going to back to December 2021. Real estate agents noted a "significant upswing" in buyer demand for apartments of all sizes, with agreed sales rising 10% from 2019, up from a fall of 11% at the start of 2023. London saw the most pronounced recovery in the broader market, with overall agreed sales increasing 11% compared to March 2019 and agreed sales of apartments 23% higher. Robert Sturges, central London area director at estate agents Chestertons, said demand for apartments was being driven by commuters looking to move closer to their work and overseas buyers taking advantage of favorable currency exchange rates. "In the face of rising living costs, some buyers may also decide that a flat is financially more viable than a house at this moment in time," Sturges added. Rightmove said a third of properties were reduced from their original asking price, up from 19% last year although in line with pre-pandemic levels. The average size of price reduction rose to 6%, or 22,000 pounds (\$27,341.60) based on the current national average asking price of 365,357 pounds, according to Rightmove. Mortgage lender Nationwide has previously said its measure of house prices fell 3.1% in the 12 months to March - the biggest annual drop since July 2009 - while rival Halifax reported a 1.6% year-on-year rise. (Reuters)
- China's consumer, factory prices skid as demand falters** - China's consumer inflation hit an 18-month low and factory-gate price declines sped up in March as demand stayed persistently weak, shoring up the case for policymakers to take more steps to support the uneven economic recovery. In contrast to surging prices globally, China's retail and producer inflation has remained anaemic as the consumer and industrial sectors struggle to recover from their pandemic hit. Analysts now think consumer inflation could fall short of Beijing's official targets this year. The consumer price index (CPI) rose 0.7% year-on-year, the slowest pace since September 2021 and weaker than the 1.0% gain in February, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said on Tuesday. The result fell short of the 1.0% rise tipped in a Reuters poll. "China's March inflation report suggests that the Chinese economy is running a disinflation process, which points to bigger room for monetary policy easing to boost demand," said Zhou Hao, economist at Guotai Junan International. The producer price index (PPI) fell 2.5% year-on-year, the fastest pace since June 2020 and compared with a 1.4% drop in February. The PPI has fallen for six straight months. China's yuan hit a more-than-one-week low against the dollar on Tuesday morning following the data, as investors stepped up bets domestic interest rates could be cut. Shanghai's benchmark stock index fell 0.25%, reversing a slight uptick in the opening. Food price inflation, a key driver of CPI, slowed to 2.4% year-on-year from 2.6% in the previous month. On a month-on-month basis, food prices fell 1.4%. That pushed the CPI down 0.3% from a month earlier after a 0.5% fall in February, dashing expectations of no change. The government has set a target for average consumer prices in 2023 to be about 3%. Prices rose 2% on year in 2022. (Reuters)

Regional

- World Bank: Oil price decline to weigh on GCC economies** - The UAE economy, the Arab World's second biggest, is forecast to grow at 3.3% in 2023, the World Bank said as it lowered its 2023 economic growth projection for the GCC countries to 3.2% from 3.7% forecast made in October last year due to an expected decline of oil prices from the highs reached in 2022. While the fastest-growing economy within the GCC is forecast to be Oman at 4.3% growth, Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude exporter, is predicted to grow 2.9% this year, registering the most significant slowdown among the GCC economies, from 8.7% in 2022 and

the 3.7% projected in October, the World Bank said in its latest update. As per the Washington-based bank's forecast, Qatar's economy is forecast to grow at 3.3%, Kuwait's at 2.7%, and Bahrain's at 3.1% in 2023. The combined GCC economy is valued at \$2tn. If GCC countries continue business as usual, what they have done for the last three or four decades, and growing approximately at an average of 4.0%, the combined economy of the GCC will be \$6tn by 2050. If they go into a green growth strategy that will improve their productivity, then they will go above \$13tn, a World Bank official has said. In 2024, the current account balance of the GCC will likely fall from 16.3% of GDP in 2022 to 12.1% in 2023 and 11.1% in 2024. The report said fiscal balances are forecast to decrease, but remain in the surplus territory, with Qatar expected to post a fiscal surplus of 6.5% and the UAE 6.2% in 2023. The GCC is expected to post a fiscal surplus of 3.2% of GDP in 2023, down from 4.3% in 2022, the report said. The bank's economists forecast that the Mena region will grow by 3.0% in 2023 and by 3.1% in 2024, much lower than the growth rate of 5.8% in 2022. The Mena average growth rate masks the stark differences across countries, the World Bank noted. Developing oil exporters in the Middle East are forecast to experience trends similar to those of the GCC but at lower levels, with 2023 growth expected to drop to 2.2% after growing at 3.9% in 2022, it added. Iraq leads the group with growth forecasts for 2023 at 2.8%, down from 7.9% in 2022, partly sustained by growth in non-oil GDP (projected at 4.5%), which is assisted by a planned budgetary expansion in 2023. Iran's GDP is expected to grow 2.0% in 2023, representing a deceleration from 2.7% growth in 2022, constrained by water and electricity shortages and political instability. In 2024 the average growth for developing oil exporters is likely to pick up slightly to 2.4%, the World Bank said. The report said the GCC economies managed to keep their inflation well below global averages. The GCC countries maintained a stable peg between their currencies and the dollar, a fixed exchange rate along with fuel subsidies and other interventions which helped contain inflation, according to the bank. (Zawya)

- UAE, Saudi Arabia to drive region's AI spending growth at world's fastest rate** - The UAE, which is on track to double the contribution of its digital economy to GDP to 19.4% from 9.7% in 10 years, is expected to spend \$20bn in technology. - Shutterstock The Middle East and Africa region will see the world's fastest spending growth in artificial intelligence, surging at a compound annual rate of 29.7% over the 2022–2026 period to \$6.4bn in 2026, driven by the UAE and Saudi Arabia, the region's most vibrant economies. According to the latest forecast from International Data Corporation, in 2023, spending on AI in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) including Israel will reach \$3.0bn, accounting for just 2.0% of the global total at \$151.4bn. The UAE, which is on track to double the contribution of its digital economy to GDP to 19.4% from 9.7% in 10 years, is expected to spend \$20bn in technology, including IT, AI, robotics and blockchain over the next three years, according to a recent report from the Boston Consulting Group. "The rapid adoption of cloud and digital transformation in MEA will result in AI being incorporated into many different products and solutions," said Manish Ranjan, senior program manager for software, cloud, and IT services at IDC MEA. He said organizations across the region are investing in AI technologies and related software and services to drive greater efficiency through automation and contribute to a more agile operating environment. "The effects of the pandemic have fueled further spending in relation to AI/ML adoption, particularly within the banking and finance, manufacturing, trade, healthcare, and government verticals." On the economic impact of AI for the Middle East, PwC projected that the region is expected to accrue \$320bn or 2.0% of the total global benefits of artificial intelligence in 2030 estimated at \$15.7tn. In absolute terms, the largest gains are expected to accrue to Saudi Arabia where AI is expected to contribute over \$135.2bn in 2030 to the economy, equivalent to 12.4% of GDP. In relative terms the UAE is expected to see the largest impact of close to 14% of 2030 GDP, according to PwC. The IDC's Worldwide Artificial Intelligence Spending Guide noted that banking, retail, and federal/central government will be the MEA region's biggest spenders on AI in 2023, followed by discrete manufacturing. "Together, these four industries will account for nearly half (44%) of the region's total AI spending in 2023. However, IDC expects professional services and transportation to be the fastest-growing industries over the five-year forecast periods, with respective CAGRs of 36.4% and 33.9%." "AI growth in the region looks very promising as

businesses are increasingly investing in AI- and analytics and business intelligence (ABI)-based solutions in order to strengthen and expand their customer experiences, build digital capabilities, and drive innovation," said Ranjan. He said numerous challenges will accompany the region's increasing adoption of AI, with the most critical being the lack of skilled resources such as data scientists, data engineers, and AI modelers. "However, the region has multiple initiatives in place aimed at upskilling local talent, with organizations in both the public and private sectors establishing partnerships to foster AI- and ML-specific learning," said Ranjan. (Zawya)

- Dubai's job growth at multi-year highs** - Business conditions in Dubai recorded a faster rate of improvement as jobs and inventory growth reached multi-year highs in March, underscoring the enduring investor appeal and confidence in the emirate's economic resilience and growth prospects. The headline purchasing managers index (PMI) rose to 55.5 in March, up from 54.1 in February and to the highest level in five months. The index signaled a sharp improvement in non-oil business conditions, with the uptick supported by stronger growth in output, employment and stocks of purchases, alongside tighter supply side conditions. Dubai's PMI reflected a pick-up in growth momentum towards the end of the first quarter with both employment and inventory levels recording stronger growth rates, reaching multi-year highs. A confluence of positive factors including innovative government strategies, visa and business reforms, a dramatic boom in real estate sector, and increased FDI flow and investor appeal, have been propelling Dubai's growth irrespective of global and geopolitical headwinds, economists said. Dubai has rolled out a mammoth \$8.7tn economic plan for the coming decade, aimed at turbocharging trade and foreign investment while reinforcing the emirate's position as a sought-after global business hub. Dubai is on track to emerge as one of the top four global financial centers with an increase in FDI to Dh650bn as over 300,000 global investors are helping build Dubai into the fastest growing global city. The UAE economy, the Arab World's second biggest, is forecast to grow at 3.3% in 2023, according to the latest World Bank report. "The Dubai PMI picked up for the first time in three months in March as companies reported greater efforts to build supply-side strength in light of a further rapid expansion in activity levels," said David Owen, senior economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence. He said the rapid expansion and subsequent increases in staffing levels and inventories of materials and components were the sharpest seen in around five years, allowing firms to increase their output to the greatest extent for six months. "However, a further slowdown in new business growth shows that demand growth is continuing to weaken from its post-Covid peak, with notable slippage seen in the wholesale and retail and travel and tourism sectors. This suggests that rapid activity growth may not be sustained, which was reflected in a slight drop in future output expectations," said Owen. During March, Dubai companies continued to report a marked improvement in client demand as firms placed greater emphasis on building capacity levels to support an expansion in output, resulting in a substantial increase in activity that was the sharpest since last September, according to S&P Global Dubai PMI survey that covers the Dubai non-oil private sector economy, with additional sector data published for travel and tourism, wholesale and retail and construction. New business inflows also increased sharply, although the rate of expansion eased slightly from February and was the least marked in just over a year. Sector data indicated that the wholesale & retail and travel & tourism sectors had lost momentum from their post-Covid peaks in 2022, with sales growth in the former reaching a 14-month low. However, a sharp rise in output meant that firms had a greater need to expand their business capacity in March. Job levels subsequently rose, with the pace of job creation picking up to the fastest since January 2018, though still an increase in employment. The March PMI data signaled an additional increase in input prices during March. Survey panelists noted rises in the price of fuel, cement and iron, as well as a slight uptick in staff wages. (Zawya)
- UAE ranks 11th globally in commodity exports with 41% growth** - The UAE has been ranked 11th globally in the export of goods in 2022 with the total value of its goods trade amounting to \$599bn. The country accounted for 2.4% of global merchandise exports with a 41% growth. When the European Union countries are treated as a single group, the UAE

ranks seventh globally, according to the 'World Trade Outlook and Statistics' report issued by the World Trade Organization (WTO) recently. The report ranked the UAE 18th globally in terms of merchandise imports in 2022, which went up by 22% to reach \$425bn, and accounted for 1.7% of the world's merchandise imports. When EU countries are treated as a group, the UAE ranks 13th globally. (Zawya)

- **PMI: Dubai's non-oil business conditions improved at faster rate in March**

- Dubai's non-oil sector grew at its fastest rate since September as companies built up capacity levels to support output expansion. The headline index of the S&P Global Dubai Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) increased to 55.5 in March, up from 54.1 in February, with any score above 50 indicating expansion. However, companies surveyed said new orders rose to the least extent since January 2022. The report said the index signaled a sharp improvement in non-oil business conditions, with the uptick supported by stronger growth in output, employment and stocks of purchases, alongside tighter supply side conditions. Wholesale and retail growth reached a 14-month low, as that sector, along with travel and tourism lost momentum from their post-COVID peaks in 2022, the report said. But, rising output meant that firms had a greater need to expand their business capacity in March. The pace of job creation picked up to the fastest since January 2018, though was still modest overall. Construction firms saw a particularly strong output expansion, the largest since September, with new orders rising sharply, with inventory and employment growth also accelerating. Firms purchased greater volumes of raw materials to service new and current projects, meaning input stocks grew at their fastest rate since May 2018. Supplier delivery times continued to shorten as vendors worked to tighter customer requirements, though the rate of improvement slipped from February's three-and-a-half-year record and was only marginal. The latest survey data signaled an additional increase in construction input prices during March, including rising prices of fuel, cement and iron, as well as a slight uptick in staff wages. Overall, firms said they were maintaining robust sales volumes by offering price discounts to customers, and the degree of positive sentiment towards future activity was 'relatively mild' in March, with 10% of survey panelists projecting growth of output over the next 12 months. David Owen, Senior Economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said that while the Dubai PMI headline index had picked up from February to March, there was 'notable slippage' seen in the wholesale and retail and travel and tourism sectors. "This suggests that rapid activity growth may not be sustained, which was reflecting in a slight drop in future output expectations," he said. (Zawya)

- **Fitch revises Oman's outlook to positive, affirms its rating at 'BB'**

- Fitch Ratings has revised Oman's outlook to positive from stable and affirmed the rating at 'BB', in a report issued today. According to Fitch, the positive outlook reflects a significant reduction in Oman's debt to GDP as a result of fiscal consolidation measures, high oil prices and the associated reduction of external liquidity risks. The agency said that the measures taken by the government helped to contain public debt, stating that the debt to GDP fell from 61% at the end of 2021 to 40% at the end of 2022. Fitch now expects the public debt to decline to 37% at the end of 2024, compared to 48% previously projected by the agency in its report issued in August 2022. Fitch forecasts a budget surplus of 2.3% of GDP and 0.1% in 2023 and 2024, respectively. Fitch also projects Oman's fiscal breakeven oil price to decline from 77 US Dollars per barrel in 2022 to 67 US Dollars per barrel in 2025, in light of ongoing fiscal measures and the implementation of the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP). The agency expects non-oil sector growth of 2.3% in 2023, pointing out the recovery of the construction sector after being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency also projects non-oil revenue to rise from 5.2% of non-oil GDP in 2022 to 5.6% in 2024. Moreover, it assumes the average Brent oil price to fall to 85 US Dollars per barrel in 2023 and 75 US Dollars per barrel in 2024. In its report, Fitch said that Oman's Sovereign net foreign assets are expected to improve in 2023. It further added that investment in renewables and hydrogen sectors are likely to support growth from 2024. The agency indicated that Oman's credit rating could be upgraded in case of medium-term stabilization of public debt and sovereign net foreign assets (as a percentage of GDP), as well as a continued decline in net external debt to GDP. The positive outlook is a significant indicator of the Government performance. It helps to foster the investors' confidence in

the national economy and improve creditworthiness. The credit ratings show the reliability of the Government to meet its obligations. It is worth noting that S&P Global Ratings revised Oman's outlook to positive and affirmed its ratings at "BB" in a report issued last month (March). It commended the efforts exerted by the Government towards fiscal and economic reforms. (Zawya)

- **Oman: CBO issues treasury bills worth \$114.2mn**

- The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR44mn by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday. The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR24mn, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.638 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.635 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.71458% and 4.73170% respectively. Whereas, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR20mn, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.746 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR89.745 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.02978% and 5.09366%, respectively. Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks with the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo). It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 5.50% while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.00%. Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. (Zawya)

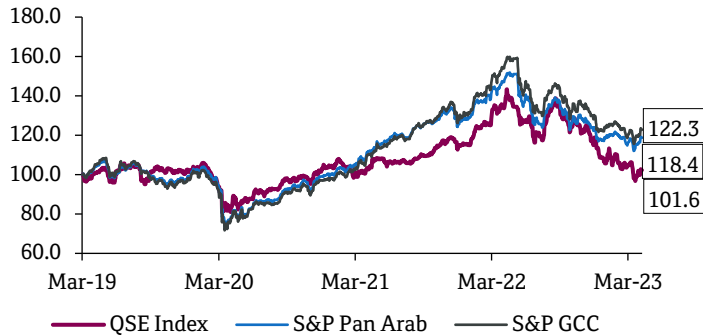
- **Oman records budget surplus of \$966.2mn, repays \$2.8bn debt**

- Oman's budget recorded a surplus of OMR372mn at the end of 2023 compared to a surplus of OMR210mn registered over the same period in 2022, according to the Fiscal Performance Monthly Bulletin published by the Ministry of Finance. The Bulletin further stated that during the first quarter of 2023, the government repaid OMR1.1bn against public debt, reducing the total government debt to OMR16.6bn at the end of March 2023. Also, the state's public revenue at the end of February 2023 amounted to OMR2.14bn, higher by 12% when compared to OMR1.91bn registered over the same period in 2022, according to the monthly Bulletin published by the Ministry of Finance. This is mainly attributed to an increase in oil and gas revenues, representing 78% of total public revenue, and an increase of current revenue by 51%. Net oil revenue at the end of February 2023 amounted to OMR1.15bn, up by 5% compared to OMR1.09bn achieved over the same period in 2022. This is driven by higher oil prices of \$86 per barrel, as well as an increase in oil production to 1,064,000 barrels per day. Furthermore, gas revenue increased to OMR521mn, up by 2% when compared to the same period in 2022. Current revenue at the end of February 2023 increased by OMR160mn, amounting to OMR471mn compared to OMR311mn registered over the same period in 2022. Public spending at the end of February 2023 amounted to OMR1.77bn, up by OMR68mn, i.e., 4% when compared to the same period in 2022. This is mainly due to an increase in current expenditure and contributions and other expenses by OMR108mn, while gas purchase and transport expenditure declined by OMR132mn as a result of transferring such expenditure to the Integrated Gas Company. Development expenditure of ministries and government units amounted to OMR50mn, representing 6% of total development spending, i.e., OMR900mn, allocated for 2023. Current expenditure of civil ministries at the end of February 2023 amounted to OMR643mn, up by OMR32mn, compared to OMR611mn registered over the same period in 2022. Total contributions and other expenses at the end of February 2023 amounted to OMR133mn, up by 133%, compared to OMR57mn registered over the same period in 2022. Oil products subsidy and water sector subsidy amounted to OMR47mn and OMR17mn, respectively, by the end of February 2023. Additionally, an amount of OMR66mn was transferred to the future debt obligations budget-item. The most significant results of the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan 2021-2024 include reducing the fiscal breakeven oil price to \$68 per barrel, increasing non-hydrocarbon revenue, reducing public debt, improving Oman's credit ratings, developing social protection system and

restructuring pension funds, as well as other direct and indirect results.
(Zawya)

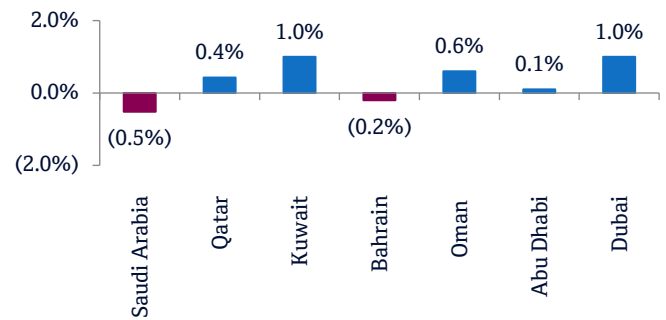
- **Oman repays \$2.9bn in loans in Q1** - Oman repaid 1.1bn rials (\$2.86bn) in loans in the first quarter, finance ministry figures show, bringing total public debt at the end of March to 16.6bn rials. Total debt was 17.7bn rials at the end of 2022. Oman repaid the debt through increased government revenue on the back of higher oil prices, the fiscal performance bulletin said. A steep decline in Oman's debt to GDP ratio, with gross debt falling to about 40% of GDP in 2022 from around 60% the previous year, plus higher oil prices and more disciplined public spending has prompted ratings agencies to upgrade the Gulf state's credit rating outlook. On Tuesday, Fitch revised Oman's outlook to positive from stable and reaffirmed its rating at BB, following a similar action from S&P earlier this month. Net oil revenue reached 1.15bn rials at the end of February, up from 1.09bn rials in the same period a year ago, as oil prices averaged \$86 per barrel in the period over \$81 per barrel at the end of February 2022. Oman's economy remains primarily reliant on hydrocarbons revenue despite plans to diversify into sectors such as tourism and logistics. Increased production combined with higher oil prices led to a budget surplus of 372mn rials at the end of February, up from 210mn rials in the prior year period, while total revenue jumped 12% and spending was 4% higher. Oil and gas revenue represented almost 80% of total public revenue, the finance ministry said, making Oman more vulnerable to global swings in oil prices. Earlier this month, Oman agreed to a voluntary oil output cut of 40,000 barrels per day starting from May until the end of 2023, along with other OPEC+ member states, pushing oil prices higher. Oman launched a medium-term fiscal plan in 2020 to reduce public debt, diversify sources of revenue, and spur economic growth. It recorded a fiscal surplus in 2022 of 1.146bn rials as higher oil prices boosted revenue.
(Zawya)

Rebased Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Daily Index Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Asset/Currency Performance	Close (\$)	1D%	WTD%	YTD%
Gold/Ounce	2,003.62	0.6	(0.2)	9.8
Silver/Ounce	25.06	0.8	0.3	4.6
Crude Oil (Brent)/Barrel (FM Future)	85.61	1.7	0.6	(0.3)
Crude Oil (WTI)/Barrel (FM Future)	81.53	2.2	1.0	1.6
Natural Gas (Henry Hub)/MMBtu	2.19	2.3	0.5	(37.8)
LPG Propane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	82.70	2.4	0.9	16.9
LPG Butane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	93.80	1.6	(1.6)	(7.6)
Euro	1.09	0.5	0.1	1.9
Yen	133.68	0.1	1.2	2.0
GBP	1.24	0.3	0.0	2.8
CHF	1.11	0.7	0.2	2.3
AUD	0.67	0.2	(0.3)	(2.3)
USD Index	102.20	(0.4)	0.1	(1.3)
RUB	110.69	0.0	0.0	58.9
BRL	0.20	1.2	1.0	5.6

Source: Bloomberg

Global Indices Performance	Close	1D%*	WTD%*	YTD%*
MSCI World Index	2,797.07	0.4	0.2	7.5
DJ Industrial	33,684.79	0.3	0.6	1.6
S&P 500	4,108.94	(0.0)	0.1	7.0
NASDAQ 100	12,031.88	(0.4)	(0.5)	15.0
STOXX 600	461.79	0.3	0.3	10.6
DAX	15,655.17	0.0	0.0	14.4
FTSE 100	7,785.72	0.1	0.1	7.2
CAC 40	7,390.28	0.6	0.6	16.2
Nikkei	27,923.37	1.0	0.3	4.8
MSCI EM	996.25	0.8	0.9	4.2
SHANGHAI SE Composite	3,313.57	(0.1)	(0.7)	7.5
HANG SENG	20,485.24	0.8	0.8	2.9
BSE SENSEX	60,157.72	0.4	0.2	(0.4)
Bovespa	106,213.76	5.8	6.5	2.2
RTS	973.39	(1.1)	(0.1)	0.3

Source: Bloomberg (*\$ adjusted returns)

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