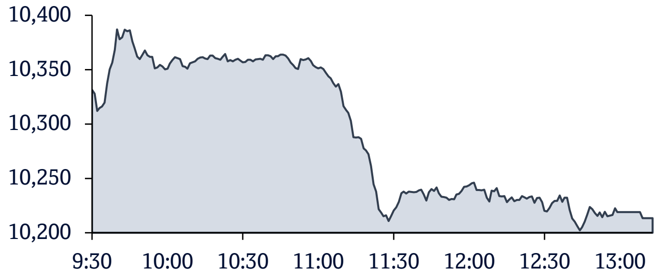
QSE Intra-Day Movement



Market Indicators	29 Mar 23	28 Mar 23	%Chg.
Value Traded (QR mn)	642.1	531.7	20.8
Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn)	594,073.1	599,916.3	(1.0)
Volume (mn)	228.3	203.5	12.2
Number of Transactions	21,225	18,596	14.1
Companies Traded	49	48	2.1
Market Breadth	14:32	46:2	–

Market Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	YTD%	TTM P/E
Total Return	21919.25	-0.9	2.1	0.2	11.7
All Share Index	3415.99	-0.9	2.1	0.0	125.3
Banks	4315.34	-1.2	2.0	-1.6	12.2
Industrials	4006.72	-1.3	0.9	6.0	11.8
Transportation	4049.51	0.7	4.4	-6.6	11.6
Real Estate	1431.91	-0.1	2.7	-8.2	16.2
Insurance	1896.54	-0.4	1.1	-13.3	1541.3
Telecoms	1473.00	0.9	3.9	11.7	52.7
Consumer Goods and Services	7763.87	-0.6	2.7	-1.9	21.2
Al Rayan Islamic Index	4561.59	-0.7	2.6	-0.7	8.7

GCC Top Gainers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Q Holding	Abu Dhabi	2.68	14.0	16.5	(33.0)
Dr.Sulaiman Al Habib Med.	Saudi Arabia	285	3.6	248.4	29.19
BBK	Bahrain	0.55	3.4	526.8	9.0
Boubyan Bank	Kuwait	646.0	3.0	176,000	(19.0)
Masraf Al Rayan	Qatar	2.87	2.9	37,483.5	(9.4)

GCC Top Losers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Qatar Islamic Bank	Qatar	17.85	(3.5)	2629.1	(3.9)
Emirates Telecom	Abu Dhabi	22.66	(2.8)	3100.0	(0.9)
Mesaieed Petrochemical	Qatar	1.95	(2.4)	4073.3	(8.6)
Ezdan Holding Grp.	Qatar	0.88	(2,2)	6632.2	(12.0)
Qatar Elec. & Water Co.	Qatar	16.92	(1.4)	255.0	(4.4)

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

Qatar Commentary

The QE Index declined 0.9% to close at 10,213.3. Losses were led by the Industrials and Banks & Financial Services indices, falling 1.3% and 1.2%, respectively. Top losers were Mannai Corporation and Mekdam Holding Group, falling 5.4% and 5%, respectively. Among the top gainers, Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance gained 8.5%, while QLM Life & Medical Insurance was up 3.1%.

GCC Commentary

Saudi Arabia: The TASI Index gained 0.3% to close at 10,503.1. Gains were led by the Health Care Equipment & Svc and Commercial & Professional Svc indices, rising 2.2% and 2.1%, respectively. Arabian Pipes Co. and Al Kathiri Holding Co. were up 10.0% each.

Dubai: The DFM Index gained 0.5% to close at 3,400.7. The Communication Services index rose 1.2%, while the Industrials index gained 0.9%. Union Properties rose 6.4% while Emirates Central Cooling Systems Corporation was up 2.4%.

Abu Dhabi: The ADX General Index fell Marginally to close at 9,455.8. The Telecommunication index declined 2.7%, while the Utilities index fell 0.3%. Emirates Driving Co declined 3.7% while Chimera S&P Turkey ETF was down 3.5%.

Kuwait: The Kuwait All Share Index fell 0.1% to close at 7,022.7. The Energy index declined 1.2%, while the Financial Services index fell 0.8%. Amar Finance & Leasing Co. declined 9.5%, while Bayan Investment Holding Co. was down 8.6%.

Oman: The MSM 30 Index fell 0.1% to close at 4,854.3. Losses were led by the Services and Financial indices, falling 1.2% and 0.2%, respectively. Al Maha Petroleum declined 9.6%, while Oman REIT was down 8.3%.

Bahrain: The BHB Index gained 0.8% to close at 1,894.4. The Materials index rose 2.0%, while the Financials index gained 0.7%. Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait rose 3.4% while Aluminium Bahrain was up 2.0%.

QSE Top Gainers	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Qatar General Ins. & Reins. Co.	1.199	8.5	308.4	(18.3)
QLM Life & Medical Insurance	3.150	3.1	21.4	(34.3)
Masraf Al Rayan	2.870	2.9	37,483.5	(9.4)
Estithmar Holding	2.010	2.5	33,175.5	(11.7)
Vodafone Qatar	2.009	2.3	3,885.2	(9.8)

QSE Top Losers	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Mannai Corporation	5.650	(5.4)	2,122.0	(25.6)
Mekdam Holding Group	6.00	(5.0)	377.0	(10.2)
Qatar Islamic Bank	17.85	(3.5)	2,629.1	(3.4)
Lesha Bank (QFC)	0.980	(3.2)	5,314.7	(14.4)
Dukhan Bank	3.400	(2.7)	21435.2	0,0

QSE Top Volume Trades	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Masraf Al Rayan	2.879	2.9	37,483.5	(9.4)
Estithmar Holding	2.010	2.5	33,175.5	(11.7)
Dukhan Bank	3.400	(2.7)	21,435.2	0.0
Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing	1.545	(1.6)	18,980.6	1.7
Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Dev.	0.606	0.2	13.420.2	(13.0)

QSE Top Value Trades	Close*	1D%	Val. '000	YTD%
Masraf Al Rayan	2.87	2.9	109,103.9	(9.4)
Dukhan Bank	3.40	(2.7)	73,712.8	0.0
Estithmar Holding	2.01	2.5	66,991,2	(11.7)
QNB Group	16.19	(1.3)	61,898.3	(10.0)
Qatar Islamic Bank	17.85	(3.5)	47,752.9	(3.4)

Regional Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%	Exch. Val. Traded ($ mn)	Exchange Mkt. Cap. ($ mn)	P/E**	P/B**	Dividend Yield
Qatar*	10213.34	-0.9	2.1	-3.4	-4.4	175.2	162,419.6	11.7	1.3	4.7
Dubai	3400.67	0.5	1.1	-1.1	1.9	100.0	162,224.0	9.1	1.2	3.9
Abu Dhabi	9455.81	0.0	-1.0	-4.0	-7.4	385.1	713,814.9	22.4	2.5	1.9
Saudi Arabia	10503.18	0.3	0.5	4.0	0.2	1,513.1	2,659,763.2	15.9	2.2	3.1
Kuwait	7022.69	-0.1	-0.4	-3.1	-3.7	120.8	146,963.7	16.4	1.1	3.6
Oman	4854.31	-0.1	-0.3	2.1	-0.1	6.0	22,847.1	11.3	0.8	3.8
Bahrain	1894.37	0.8	-0.2	-1.9	0.0	23.5	65,466.6	6.1	0.6	6.3

*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 declined 0.9% to close at 10,213.3. The Industrials and Banks & Financial Services indices led the losses. The index fell on the back of selling pressure from Arab and Foreign shareholders despite buying support from Qatari and GCC shareholders.
- Mannai Corporation and Mekdam Holding Group were the top losers, falling 5.4% and 5%, respectively. Among the top gainers, Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance gained 8.5%, while QLM Life & Medical Insurance was up 3.1%.
- Volume of shares traded on Wednesday rose by 12.2% to 228.3mn from 203.5mn on Tuesday. Further, as compared to the 30-day moving average of 140mn, volume for the day was 63.1% higher. Masraf Al Rayan and Estithmar Holding were the most active stocks, contributing 16.4% and 14.5% to the total volume, respectively.

Overall Activity	Buy %*	Sell %*	Net (QR)
Qatari Individuals	33.61%	33.65%	(226,893.4)
Qatari Institutions	28.40%	23.59%	30,866,443.3
Qatari	**62.01%**	**57.24%**	**30,639,549.9**
GCC Individuals	0.29%	0.25%	258,511.0
GCC Institutions	3.97%	2.52%	9,295,197.5
GCC	**4.26%**	**2.77%**	**9,553,708.5**
Arab Individuals	12.08%	13.81%	(11,089,121.9)
Arab Institutions	0.00%	0.48%	(3,077,685.3)
Arab	**12.08%**	**14.28%**	**(14,166,807.3)**
Foreigners Individuals	3.49%	2.55%	6,057,692.8
Foreigners Institutions	18.17%	23.17%	(32,084,144.0)
Foreigners	**21.66%**	**25.71%**	**(26,026,451.1)**

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

Earnings Releases, Earnings Calendar and Global Economic Data

Earnings Releases

Company	Market	Currency	Revenue (mn) FY2022	% Change YoY	Operating Profit (mn) FY2022	% Change YoY	Net Profit (mn) FY2022	% Change YoY
National Cement Company	Dubai	AED	137.00	-7.1%	(48.3)	N/A	(28.7)	N/A
Alhasoob Co.	Saudi Arabia	SR	220.24	-14.1%	8.2	-36.0%	6.7	-44.3%

Earnings Calendar

Tickers	Company Name	Date of reporting 1Q2023 results	No. of days remaining	Status
QIBK	Qatar Islamic Bank	11-Apr-23	12	Due
QFLS	Qatar Fuel Company	12-Apr-23	13	Due
ABQK	Ahli Bank	18-Apr-23	19	Due
QISI	Qatar Islamic Insurance	30-Apr-23	31	Due

Source: QSE

Global Economic Data

Date	Market	Source	Indicator	Period	Actual	Consensus	Previous
03-29	US	National Assoc. of Realtors	Pending Home Sales MoM	Feb	0.80%	-3.00%	8.10%
03-29	US	National Assoc. of Realtors	Pending Home Sales NSA YoY	Feb	-21.10%	NA	-22.40%
03-29	UK	Bank of England	Net Consumer Credit	Feb	1.4b	1.2b	1.7b
03-29	Germany	GfK AG	GfK Consumer Confidence	Apr	-29.50	-30.00	-30.60

Qatar

- **QatarEnergy enters into 'farm-in' agreement with ExxonMobil Canada for two offshore exploration licenses -** QatarEnergy has entered into a farm-in agreement with ExxonMobil Canada for two exploration licenses offshore the province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada. Pursuant to the agreement, QatarEnergy holds a 28% working interest in license EL 1167, where the Gale exploration well and associated activities are planned. ExxonMobil Canada (operator) holds 50% while Cenovus Energy holds 22%. QatarEnergy also holds a 40% working interest in license EL 1162, while ExxonMobil Canada (operator) holds the remaining 60%. The transaction has completed all necessary formalities with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB). Commenting on this occasion, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, said: “We are pleased to sign this agreement with our strategic partner, ExxonMobil, to further grow our offshore Atlantic Canada portfolio as part of our international growth drive, and look forward to continue working within Canada’s transparent and stable regulatory environment.” Al-Kaabi added: "I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, which has been very supportive of this process, and look forward to a successful exploration campaign with our partners.” Located offshore Eastern Canada, EL 1167 and EL 1162 lie in water depths ranging from 100 to 1,200 meters and cover an area of approximately 1,420 and 2,400 square kilometers, respectively. (Gulf Times)
- **PSA: Qatar records QR22.92bn trade surplus in February -** Faster expansion in the exports of petroleum gases led Qatar's trade surplus to jump 2.9% year-on-year to QR22.92bn in February 2023, according to the official data. Qatar's exports were almost four times its imports, according to figures released by the Planning and Statistics Authority (PSA). The country's total exports (valued free on board) amounted to QR31.03bn, while the total imports (cost, insurance, and freight) were QR8.1bn in the review period. However, the trade surplus shrank 5.7% month-on-month in February 2023. Asia/South East Asia constituted a majority of Qatar's

exports in January 2023; while imports came from variegated sources. The country's total exports of goods (including exports of goods of domestic origin and re-exports) showed 2.2% and 8.7% contraction year-on-year and month-on-month respectively in the review period. In February this year, Qatar's shipments to China amounted to QR6.05bn or 19.5% of the total exports of the country, followed by South Korea QR5.04bn (16.3%), India QR3.97bn (12.8%), Japan QR3.37bn (10.9%) and Singapore QR2.26bn (7.3%). On a yearly basis, Qatar's exports to Japan plummeted 36.39% and China by 14.4%; whereas those to Singapore shot up 70.95%, South Korea by 35.59% and India by 21.92% in February 2023. On a monthly basis, Qatar's exports to Singapore declined 4.32%, China by 3.53%, India by 0.75% and Japan by 0.36%; while those to South Korea zoomed 39.65% in the review period. The exports of petroleum gases and other gaseous hydrocarbons grew 3.7% on an annualized basis to QR19.63bn; while those of non-crude by 18.5% to QR2.45bn, crude by 11.9% to QR4.8bn and other commodities by 9.3% to QR3.26bn in February 2023. On a monthly basis, the exports of other non-specified commodities expanded 10%; while those of non-crude tanked 22.8%, petroleum gases by 11% and crude by 3.2% this February. Petroleum gases constituted 65.13% of the exports of total domestic products in February 2023 compared to 61.13% a year ago; followed by crude 15.93% (17.59%), non-crude 8.13% (9.68%) and other commodities 10.81% (11.59%). Qatar's total imports were seen declining 14.3% and 16.4% year-on-year and month-on-month respectively in February 2023. The country's imports from China stood at QR1.26bn, which accounted for 15.6% of the total imports; followed by the US at QR1.06bn (13.1%), India at QR0.56bn (6.9%), Germany at QR0.52bn (6.4%) and Italy at QR0.44bn (5.4%), at the end of February 2023. On a yearly basis, Qatar's imports from Italy plunged 36.34%, China by 24.58% and India by 15.17%; while those from Germany and the US increased 21.93% and 12.66% respectively in the review period. On a monthly basis, the country's imports from Italy shrank 55.21%, China by 17.71%, Germany by 5.14% and India by 4.44%; whereas those from the US grew 0.76% in February 2023. In February 2023, the "Turbojets, turbo-propellers, and Other Gas Turbines; Parts Thereof" was at the top of the imported group of commodities, valued at QR0.6bn, showing an increase of 39.5% year-on-year. In the second place was "Motor Cars & Other Motor Vehicles for The Transport of Persons" with QR0.29bn, which however showed a decrease of 40.1% on a yearly basis in February 2023. In third place was "Electrical Apparatus for Line Telephony/Telegraphy, Telephone Sets Etc.; Parts Thereof" with QR0.27bn, registering an increase of 19.7% on an annualized basis. (Gulf Times)

- **Qatari German Co. for Medical Devices postpones its AGM and EGM to April 09 due to lack of quorum -** Qatari German Co. for Medical Devices announced that due to non-legal quorum for the AGM and EGM on 29/03/2023, therefore, it has been decided to postpone the meeting to 09/04/2023& 09:30 PM& company Head Quarter/virtually. (QSE)

- **Medicare Group Co. The AGM Endorses items on its agenda -** Medicare Group Co. announces the results of the AGM. The meeting was held on 29/03/2023 and the following resolution were approved. 1) The General Assembly endorsed the Board of Directors' Report on the Company's activities and its financial position over the fiscal year ended on 31/12/2022 and Future business plan of the company. 2) The General Assembly endorsed the External Auditor's report on the Company's balance sheet and on the final accounts for the fiscal year ended on 31/12/2022. 3) The General Assembly endorsed the Company's balance sheet, profit and loss account for the fiscal year ended on 31/12/2022. 4) The General Assembly endorsed the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividends of 26.25 % of the nominal value of the share (i.e QR 0.2625 per share). 5) The General Assembly discharged the members of board of Directors from liability for the financial year ended on 31/12/2022; and endorsed their remuneration. 6) The General Assembly endorsed the Company's Governance Report for the Year 2022. 7) The General Assembly appointed Ernst & Young as External Auditors for the financial year 2023 and approved their fees. 8) The General Assembly approved the recommendation of the Board of Directors to top-up the withdrawn amount of the charitable fund allocated for the medical treatment of cases that are unable to bear the costs of the treatment. The said fund was previously approved by the company's Ordinary General Assembly in the amount of one million Qatari Riyals. (QSE)

- **Widam Food Company postpones its AGM to April 05 due to lack of quorum -** Widam Food Company announced that due to non-legal quorum for the AGM on 29/03/2023, therefore, it has been decided to postpone the meeting to 05/04/2023& 09:30 PM& ALShomoukh Tower, Tower B, M Floor. (QSE)

- **PwC: Cloud is the engine to drive financial services next wave of innovation -** With the region's continuous digital transformation, businesses need to rely on agility and scalability to sustain competitive advantage. PwC's latest Cloud Business Survey explores cloud computing as a catalyst for transformation and innovation in financial services, as more business executives are adopting cloud services. The survey further highlights the various benefits and gains demonstrated in markets where Cloud services have been utilized and regulations' active role in supporting the use of Cloud. According to the survey, 66% of the financial services organizations are turning towards Cloud for growth and innovation. This shift towards Cloud comes to benefit the growing variety of built-in features and services that support data lakes, related analytics and AI capabilities and reduce the foundational technical and operational complexity within organizations. With the increase of cloud services in the GCC region, the demand has been growing steadily among financial services organizations, making it a key point of discussion in the transformation agenda. In PwC's latest Global Annual CEO survey, the results showed that 66% of the Middle East CEOs said they expect to deploy cloud technology, artificial intelligence, and other advanced technology in operations. Improving workforce skills is a critical component of this digital transformation, with 74% of Middle East CEOs said they expect to invest in reskilling their workforce. The survey also finds that enterprises have realized the cloud's full potential, becoming more cloud-powered to enable reinventing their businesses. Commenting on the results, Julien Chenelat, Financial Services Digital Partner, PwC Middle East, said: "Cloud transformation is a continuous journey, not just a milestone. Organizations need to embrace the shift to Cloud services, replacing the rigidity of legacy systems and infrastructure, with modern abstracted on-demand environments and services. This will provide organizations with a competitive edge for agility and scalability. At PwC Middle East, we help businesses reimagine the way they work with our cloud-powered solutions to build trust and deliver sustained outcomes." (Peninsula Qatar)

- **Philippine envoy sees Qatar as gateway to African, European markets -** The Philippines' top diplomat here has underscored Qatar's potential as a strategic gateway for Philippine trade expansion into Africa and Europe. Speaking to Gulf Times on the sidelines of her visit to the Business and Innovation Park of the Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZA) yesterday, Philippine ambassador Lillibeth Pono lauded the incentives Qatar is offering to foreign investors, saying this presents "a lot of opportunities" for partnerships between Philippine and Qatar businesses. "Qatar can be a hub for the possible distribution of products and services from the Philippines. Qatar could be our gateway to Africa and to other parts of Europe," Pono pointed out, citing a presentation delivered by QFZA chief markets officer Chong Joon Woon. During the visit to QFZ, Pono was accompanied by Consul General Cassandra Sawadjaan, Vice Consul Jeffrey Batac, and Political & Economic Assistant & Attache Catherine F Palomo, as well as Business Partners Consulting CEO Jyerex Go Abrasado, Pythos Technology Philippines chairman and CEO Ernest Thomas V Nierras, and Caterina Netti, chief scientist. The ambassador also emphasized the importance of sharing best practices and knowledge transfer between Qatar and the Philippines, saying this would benefit both economies. Pono stressed that the Philippines has a very robust Information Technology (IT) sector, which is an area that could be explored further for closer partnership between the Philippines and Qatar. "The Philippines has superb training for IT professionals. In fact, IT professionals are in-demand worldwide," the ambassador noted. The ambassador noted that the medical sector "is also another field that is full of potential for growth and development, as there is a good number of Filipino doctors and nurses working here." Abrasado, who organized Pono's visit to QFZA, stressed that Qatar's free zones are conducive for expanding business operations, especially for Filipino companies seeking access to international markets. (Gulf Times)

- **'Qatar debt to decline in 2023 and 2024' -** Qatar's debt/GDP (gross domestic product) ratio is expected to significantly decline and the subsequent debt path will depend on how the government chooses to deploy its fiscal surpluses, according to Fitch, a global credit rating agency. "We project debt/GDP to fall to about 45% of GDP in 2023 and 42% in 2024, from a peak at 85% in 2020. This reflects our expectation that the government will continue to repay maturing external debt in 2023 ($7.5bn) and 2024 ($4.8bn) and to gradually pay down some of its domestic debt" it said in a report. Large surpluses would still allow Qatar to transfer new funds to the Qatar Investment Authority. it said. Fitch said the subsequent debt path would depend on how the government chooses to deploy its fiscal surpluses. "The persistence of a high global bond yield environment could encourage Qatar to continue to allocate a share of its surpluses to deleveraging beyond 2024, although our baseline assumes that external debt is rolled over," it said. The country's debt metrics include government overdrafts with local banks (QR61bn at end-2022), which the sovereign does not include in its headline figure. The rating agency estimates that Qatar's economy-wide net external debt position declined to 13% of GDP at end-2022, reflecting the rise in nominal GDP and the reduction in banks' foreign liabilities, from about 30% at end-2021. Fitch estimates the debt of non-bank government-related entities (GRE) at over 40% of GDP. The biggest GRE borrowers are Qatar Airways, QatarEnergy and Ooredoo, together accounting for over a third of Qatar's GRE debt. Qatar Airways posted a profit in the financial year ending March 2022 (FY22) after receiving a $3bn equity injection from its shareholder (the Qatar Investment Authority) in FY21. (Gulf Times)

International

- **Lawmaker: Fed's Powell discussed FDIC limits with House Republicans -** US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell told Republican lawmakers that Congress should re-evaluate limits on the size of federally insured bank deposits, US Representative Kevin Hern said on Wednesday. "We talked about that, but he said it was the role for Congress to really evaluate. Thought it was a great topic to bring up," Hern said after Powell spoke to a closed-door meeting of the Republican Study Committee. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp currently insures up to $250,000 per depositor, but the Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank collapses this month have raised questions over whether insurance limits needed to be raised. On another topic, Hern said Powell told Republicans that he believed supply chain inflation had mostly been mitigated. The Republican Study Committee, the largest caucus in Congress, invited Powell at a time when Republicans and Democrats are battling over raising Washington's $31.4tn debt ceiling and crafting a budget for the fiscal year that begins on Oct. 1. The health of the banking industry has also weighed heavily on the minds of lawmakers and regulators lately. Hern said Powell acknowledged during the meeting that the flurry of deposits moving from smaller banks to the industry's giants had been a problem "early on" following the two banks' collapse, but "that has slowed to stopped." (Reuters)
- **NRF: US retail sales to grow at slower pace in 2023 -** Retail sales in the United States are expected to grow at a slower pace this year, the National Retail Federation (NRF) said on Wednesday, as fears of a recession and tremors in the banking industry cast a shadow over a recovery in consumer spending. The trade body said it expects retail sales to rise between 4% and 6% to up to $5.23tn, in comparison to 7% growth in 2022 to $4.9tn. The forecast comes even as NRF noted consumer spending held up fairly well in the first quarter of the year, thanks to a strong labor market, wage growth and savings built over the pandemic Americans are sitting on about a trillion dollars in excess savings -- as higher-income households delayed big-ticket purchases in the face of inflation -- and are likely to continue to spend on goods and services in a reopening economy, NRF CEO Matthew Shay said, but added that sales would still be moderate. Last year, the retail industry took a beating due to stubbornly high inflation and dwindling discretionary budgets at American households that left companies ranging from Walmart Inc to Macy's Inc with excess inventories. While inflation is showing signs of cooling, NRF projected it will remain between 3% and 3.5% for all goods and services for the year. "It's kind of a surprise that we've had some strength (in retail sales) in the first couple of months. But it's also too early to know the lagged effect of interest rate (hikes) and... the banking sector turmoil," NRF Chief Economist Jack Kleinhenz said on a press call. The global banking sector is staring at the biggest crisis since 2008 following the collapse of two US lenders and the rescue takeover of Credit Suisse, which ratcheted up fears of a contagion. (Reuters)
- **US pending home sales rise for third straight month; loan demand increases -** Contracts to buy US previously owned homes increased for a third straight month in February, raising cautious optimism that the housing market slump could be bottoming out. The National Association of Realtors (NAR) said on Wednesday its Pending Home Sales Index, based on signed contracts, rose 0.8% last month to the highest level since August. Contracts jumped 6.5% in the Northeast. They also edged higher in the Midwest and South but dropped 2.4% in the West. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast contracts, which become sales after a month or two, would fall 2.3%. The surprise increase occurred despite a rise in mortgage rates from early February through early March, according to data from mortgage finance agency Freddie Mac. Before the recent rise, mortgage rates had mostly been on the decline since November. Mortgage rates have since been trending lower as the collapse of two US regional banks sparked fears of contagion in the banking sector, pushing down US Treasury yields. "These data are potentially signaling some stabilization in home sales at lower levels," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S economist at High Frequency Economics in White Plains, New York. Pending home sales decreased 21.1% in February on a year-on-year basis. Data this month showed sales of previously owned homes rebounded for the first time in a year in February, while new home sales notched their third straight monthly increase. Homebuilder sentiment is recovering, though it remains at depressed levels. Single-family housing starts and building permits also rose in February. The housing market has been squeezed by the aggressive interest rate hikes delivered by the Federal Reserve in its battle to tame high inflation, with residential investment contracting for seven straight quarters, the longest such streak since the collapse of the housing bubble triggered by the 2007-2009 Great Recession. (Reuters)
- **US consumer bankers tighten monitoring, processes as industry reels -** Consumer and mid-sized banks are planning to monitor their internal processes more closely and hold more frequent discussions with regulators as the industry tries to move forward from weeks of turmoil, industry executives say. Industry leaders were taking stock after the collapses of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank and trying to differentiate solid institutions from troubled ones, executives said at a conference in Las Vegas. "There is definitely optimism among bankers despite the last few weeks, but they are not turning a blind eye to what has happened," Consumer Bankers Association (CBA) CEO Lindsey Johnson told Reuters at the conference, which ends on Wednesday. "We are still taking stock of what happened and making sure that we're prepared for what's to come and helping consumers work through that," said Johnson, whose industry association has 73 member banks that held more than in $15tn in assets as of 2021. She spoke as senior executives from regional and mid-sized US banks gathered alongside regulators for the association's annual conference this week. The general view was that the recent bank collapses were "isolated events and unlikely to spread", said an executive from a large lender who declined to be identified because they were not authorized to speak publicly. "This feels very different from the 2008 crisis and is certainly not as dramatic," the executive said. Mid-sized US lenders said they are trying to hang onto customer deposits by paying better rates and tweaking some of their existing strategies after the recent bank failures triggered a $119bn exodus from small institutions. Regulators also drew attention to the need for managing risks at non-banks similar to banks. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Rohit Chopra said regulators were focused on maintaining stability of the financial system. The collapse of SVB and Signature Bank, which was later bought by a subsidiary of New York Community Bancorp, shook public confidence in banks and prompted unprecedented government action to shore up the sector. A broader S&P index of bank shares has fallen 14% this year. However, bank stocks edged higher on Tuesday for a second consecutive day after US regulators said they would backstop a deal for regional lender First Citizens

BancShares to acquire failed Silicon Valley Bank. In recent weeks, President Joe Biden, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and industry executives have made public statements aimed at reassuring depositors. "The banking system is pretty sound," and large and regional banks are well-capitalized, Citigroup Inc CEO Jane Fraser said last week. Even after the attempts to shore up confidence, Biden said on Tuesday that the banking crisis was "not over yet". (Reuters)

- **UK's Feb car output jumps 13.1% as supply-chain snags ease -** British car production rose 13.1% in February in its first monthly increase in three, helped by an easing of supply-chain snags and robust output in both domestic and overseas markets. Britain's car output rose by 8,050 units to 69,707 units cars last month, with exports rising 11.5% and domestic output jumping 20.3%, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) said in a statement on Thursday. SMMT said about 81.2% of the total produced cars were exported, mainly to the European Union, and in smaller volumes to countries including Japan, Australia and Turkey, offsetting declines to the US and China. The global auto industry has been grappling with a pandemic-induced shortage of key components for the last two years, particularly semiconductor chips. Supply chain disruptions in China due to strict months-long lockdowns also weighed on the sector. Production of hybrid, plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles continued to rise, with combined volumes surging by 72.2% to 27,392 units in February, the data showed. Earlier this month, SMMT had said Britain needed to urgently respond to large-scale US and EU initiatives to support industry, or it would risk falling behind in the race to build electric vehicles (EVs). The US last year announced $369bn in subsidies to support clean technologies and EVs under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). That was followed up by the Green Deal Industrial Plan proposed by the EU last month on concerns that the US law could put companies based in Europe at a disadvantage. (Reuters)
- **GFK: German consumer morale slows down on path to recovery -** German consumer sentiment is set to nudge up in April as energy prices have relented somewhat from record highs, though a full recovery is not in sight anytime soon, showed a GfK institute survey on Wednesday The institute forecast its consumer sentiment index to improve to -29.5 heading into April from a revised reading of -30.6 in March, slightly below the expectations of analysts polled by Reuters of -29.0. April's reading, rising for the sixth month in a row, shows sentiment is on its way towards recovery, GfK said, but the pace of growth has slowed noticeably compared with previous months. “The anticipated loss of purchasing power is preventing a sustained recovery of domestic demand,” said GfK consumer expert Rolf Buerkl, which means private consumption is not likely to contribute to the German economy in a positive way this year. “This is also indicated by the still very low level of consumer confidence,” he said. The subindex measuring income expectations was the main contributor to the increase in sentiment, rising to its highest level in 10 months, -24.3, in March from -27.3 in February. “The income outlook is currently benefiting from noticeably lower prices for energy, especially for gasoline and heating oil. Nevertheless, inflation will remain high,” Buerkl said. (Reuters)
- **BOJ's new deputy chief flags chance of change to yield control policy -** Bank of Japan (BOJ) Deputy Governor Shinichi Uchida said on Wednesday a tweak to the central bank's bond yield control policy will "undoubtedly" become an option if economic and price conditions justify phasing out stimulus. In his first public appearance since assuming the post earlier this month, Uchida said the BOJ may consider various means or policy steps, including those not taken now, once prospects heighten for inflation to sustainably hit its target. If various conditions fall in place, some sort of change to yield curve control may become necessary. If conditions turn positive, (a tweak) will undoubtedly become a possibility," Uchida told parliament. "We won't rule out any option, if we deem it as necessary for Japan's economy and achievement of price stability," Uchida said, when asked by an opposition lawmaker whether the BOJ could raise its long-term yield target, while keeping short-term interest rates very low. Uchida said trend inflation was "extremely important" in judging whether Japan will sustainably meet the BOJ's 2% price target. Rather than focusing on a particular set of indicators, however, the central bank will look comprehensively at various data in setting monetary policy, he added. A career central banker, Uchida is one of two deputy governors. The other deputy, Ryozo Himino, is the former head of Japan's banking regulator. Both assumed their posts on March 20. Under yield curve control (YCC), the BOJ guides short-term rates at -0.1% and the 10-year bond yield around 0% as part of efforts to reflate growth and sustainably hit its 2% inflation target. The BOJ's huge bond buying to defend its yield target has drawn criticism from analysts and some lawmakers for causing dysfunctions in the market and distorting the shape of the yield curve. With inflation already exceeding its target, markets are rife with speculation the BOJ could tweak or end YCC when new governor Kazuo Ueda succeeds incumbent Haruhiko Kuroda whose second, five-year term ends in April. BOJ officials, including Kuroda, have repeatedly said the central bank will not roll back its massive stimulus until the recent cost-push inflation turns into one driven by strong demand and higher wage growth. Deputy governor Himino echoed that view on Wednesday, telling the same parliament committee the BOJ must maintain ultra-loose policy to support the economy and lay the groundwork for firms to hike wages. (Reuters)

Regional

- **Real GDP growth in the GCC region will slow to 3.5% in 2023 -** Real GDP growth in the GCC region will moderate from an estimated 7.6% in 2022 to 3.5% in 2023, according to a new report by S&P Global Market Intelligence. The decline is expected to be more due to lower year-on-year (y-o-y) oil output and spillovers of weaker global demand on activity momentum in the non-hydrocarbon economy than to tighter financial conditions brought about by the regional central banks mirroring the US Federal Reserve's moves on interest rates. The monetary tightening is likely to reduce lingering inflationary pressures in the GCC region and is supportive of GCC banks' profitability, the report said, with the intelligence provider adding that it does not expect banks to be materially impacted by uncertainty in global financial markets. "Given that we expect at least one more rate hike from the US Fed later this year, depending on the extent to which the recent turmoil affects growth, employment, and inflation, we believe that we have not seen the last of the interest rate hikes from central banks around the GCC," said Jamil Nayeem, principal economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence. Although average inflation in the GCC is likely to remain above long-term trends in 2023, it will further decline to 2.3% in 2024. "We expect average annual consumer price index growth in the GCC region to decline from an estimated 3.6% in 2022 to 3.0% in 2023 due to lower global commodity prices year on year, gradually receding supply chain disruption concerns, and higher domestic interest rates." Meanwhile, the latest rate hike will continue to support profitability in the GCC region's banking sectors as loan-to-deposit interest rate spreads rise, supporting net interest income. Banking sectors with a higher proportion of non-interest earning Islamic bank deposits, like Saudi Arabia, will benefit more from the rate hikes, the report noted. (Zawya)
- **New Saudi law to set off region's next freehold boom -** An impending landmark law that allows non-Saudi residents to own property in the kingdom will be a game-changer for the Middle East's property market, prompting more countries in the region to join the freehold boom. The new law, which has been eagerly awaited by the global investor community, is under review and will allow non-Saudi nationals to own property in all parts of the kingdom, including Makkah and Madinah, according to Abdullah Alhammad, CEO of the Real Estate General Authority (Rega). “The upcoming law for foreigners to own real estate is in its final stages, and shall be passed soon. It is broader and more inclusive than the current property-owning system,” he said. The reform is expected to kick-off a new round of freehold boom in the Gulf region more than two decades after it was trail-blazed in the UAE, property market experts said. “We have monitored the negative effects of foreign ownership of property in order to avoid them and find solutions for problems and unacceptable practices,” Alhammad was quoted as saying. According to property market pundits, the recent hike in real estate prices in the kingdom is due to the gap between supply and demand in the real estate market, which has negatively impacted investors, as land prices significantly increased. Saudi Arabia is working on real estate projects worth $1.1tn, in order to diversify its economy by 2030, and is planning to build over 4mn residential units and houses in different regions in the kingdom by 2030. Saudi Arabia, which is on the cusp of a spectacular transition driven by a

series of giga-projects, including the ambitious $500bn Neom, seeks to lower real estate prices through boosting demand and striking economic balance in the sector. Alhammad said the government aims to inject units at affordable prices and support supply by offering government lands and forming partnerships with the private sector, especially in Riyadh that is witnessing a remarkable rise in prices. The Saudi real estate sector accounts for nearly 5.1% of the kingdom's GDP and 12.8% of the non-oil GDP, Alhammad said. In April 2022, the kingdom announced a proposed amendment to laws on foreign ownership of property and invited public feedback. The proposals include amendments to current rules on ownership in development zones, and in Makkah and Medina. Property ownership is restricted to Saudi nationals in these two locations, with the only exception being offices and branches of companies licensed by the Saudi Central Bank or the Capital Markets Authority. Currently, land ownership is restricted to Saudis or – subject to certain extra rules – GCC citizens and entities. Non-Saudi, non-GCC ownership is permissible for companies as part of a particular project and requires a foreign investment license from the Ministry of Investment. Foreign ownership is also permitted when the property is located within one of the four economic cities and subject to the regulations of those cities and the Special Zones Authority. Deloitte, a leading professional services network, has predicted that the real estate markets of Dubai and Saudi Arabia are poised for further growth in 2023, mainly driven by the spurt in residential sales across both geographies. Riyadh and Dubai continue to be attractive commercial markets as occupiers search for growth away from the Far East and Europe, it said. "As global economies fully reopen post-pandemic, we predict continued growth in the Saudi real estate market throughout 2023. Growth is set to be driven by robust spending across a wide range of government initiatives as well as a strong private sector that is responding to pent up levels of demand for good quality real estate projects," said Stefan Burch, partner and head of Real Estate at Deloitte Middle East. (Reuters)

- **Riyadh joins Shanghai Cooperation Organization as ties with Beijing grow -** Saudi Arabia's cabinet approved on Wednesday a decision to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as Riyadh builds a long-term partnership with China despite US security concerns. Saudi Arabia has approved a memorandum on granting the kingdom the status of a dialogue partner in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), state news agency SPA said. The SCO is a political and security union of countries spanning much of Eurasia, including China, India and Russia. Formed in 2001 by Russia, China and former Soviet states in Central Asia, the body has been expanded to include India and Pakistan, with a view to playing a bigger role as counterweight to Western influence in the region. Iran also signed documents for full membership last year. Joining the SCO was discussed during a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Saudi Arabia last December, sources have told Reuters. Dialogue partner status will be a first step within the organization before granting the kingdom full membership in the mid-term, they said. The decision followed an announcement by Saudi Aramco (2222.SE) which raised its multi-bn dollar investment in China on Tuesday, by finalizing a planned joint venture in northeast China and acquiring a stake in a privately controlled petrochemical group. Riyadh's growing ties with Beijing have raised security concerns in Washington, its traditional ally. Washington says Chinese attempts to exert influence around the world will not change U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states have voiced concern about what they see as a withdrawal from the region by main security guarantor the United States, and have moved to diversify partners. Washington says it will stay an active partner in the region. Countries belonging to the organization plan to hold a joint "counter-terrorism exercise" in Russia's Chelyabinsk region in August this year. (Zawya)
- **Saudi Arabia's Al Rajhi Bank to raise $1bn with sukuk -** Saudi Arabia's Al Rajhi Bank (1120.SE) is set to raise $1bn with five-year sustainable Islamic bonds, a document from one of the banks arranging the deal showed on Wednesday. The spread on the sukuk was set at 110 basis points (bps) over U.S. Treasuries (UST), tightened from initial price guidance of around 150 bps over UST after demand topped $3.75bn, the document showed. Al Rajhi Capital, Citi, Emirates NBD Capital, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, JPMorgan, KFH Capital and Standard Chartered are joint lead managers and bookrunners for the debt sale. (Reuters)
- **Corporate loans to drive Saudi banks' credit growth -** The credit growth in Saudi Arabia's banking system is strong and will be driven by corporate loans, said Al Rajhi Capital, a leading financial services provider in the kingdom, in a new report. However, relatively modest growth in profits (before Zakat) indicates the ongoing pressure on the cost of funding, according to the report. Mortgage origination came in at SR7.1bn ($1.89bn), lower than January, but slightly better than our expectations. "Our updated estimate for monthly mortgage origination for 2023 is SR6.8bn (earlier: SR7.0bn)," Al Rajhi Capital said in the report. "Our loan growth estimate of 10% for 2023e is on the conservative side and we see upside risks to it. Total deposits in the month of Feb grew 1.2% m-o-m, higher than credit growth of 0.9%, which should ease some pressure on the funding side going forward." (Zawya)
- **Tourism Education Initiative launched to qualify Saudi talents to work in the sector -** The Ministry of Tourism has launched the Tourism Education Initiative, with the aim of supporting talented Saudi students and qualifying them to work in the tourism sector. The Tourism Education Initiative includes several educational qualitative programs targeting the schools and universities students. The Ministry said that it seeks to partner with large national and international educational establishments, in order to open study opportunities for university students to enroll in majors required by the labor market. This will also increase the student's awareness, and guide their future trips toward the tourism educational paths. The initiative aims in raising the educational quality in tourism and hospitality fields, as well as developing the Saudi talents' skills. The Ministry has allocated several educational paths in the initiative for the school students, of which are the tourism and hospitality skills and tourism guidance. The educational programs determined for the university students: A diploma in tourism and travel at the Tabuk University in cooperation with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU); a diploma in mountain resort management at King Khalid University in cooperation with the Swiss University of Les Roches. Also, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals will include a diploma in hospitality and business administration. The MBSC — Prince Mohammed Bin Salman College of Business and Entrepreneurship — program will include a master's degree in management, a track in tourism management. While the program of the Batterjee Medical College, in cooperation with the Italian University of Palermo, will be about the diploma in recovery and therapeutic tourism operations. The Ministry has signed a number of memorandums of cooperation within the initiative, including a memorandum of cooperation with King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, with the aim of adding new tourism educational subjects. (Zawya)
- **Israel, UAE: ADNOC, BP to Form Joint Venture to Invest in Mediterranean Gas Industry -** The United Arab Emirates' Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. (ADNOC) and British oil and gas company BP plan to form a natural gas joint venture and have made an offer to acquire a 50% stake in Israel's NewMed Energy and take the company private, Bloomberg reported on March 28. (Bloomberg)
- **KPMG: Family businesses contribute 60% of UAE's GDP -** Family-owned businesses remain powerful and influential organizations in the UAE in general and Dubai in specific contributing 60% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and 80% of the total workforce, according to KPMG. In this context, the new decree establishing the Family Business Centre in the emirate of Dubai underscores further the role of family-owned businesses in driving national economic growth and development, said Al Tamimi Investments (ATI), one of the UAE's leading venture capital firms. The company noted that the Centre will provide the much-needed business support by offering resources necessary for them to overcome unique challenges, compete and thrive in a competitive business environment, as well as expand regionally and globally in the long term. Issued by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the decree gives the Centre a mandate to extend technical and administrative support to family-run organizations. It also aims to help them have smooth succession plans to guarantee their growth and sustainability.

The new decree was released on the heels of the implementation of the UAE Family Business Law in January 2023. “The Centre marks another milestone for Dubai and the UAE’s continuously growing business landscape. Its establishment reflects how the government puts a high premium on the contributions of family-owned companies, in addition to recognizing their role in the UAE’s bid to become one of the best nations in the world in the next 50 years and beyond,” said Dani Tabbara, COO, Al Tamimi Investments (ATI). “We are confident that this latest development will open new immense opportunities for family businesses by providing key resources fundamental to their success. We look forward to finding ways to contribute to the Centre’s mission and goals.” (Zawya)

- **UAE: Artificial intelligence market to reach $1.9bn by 2026 -** The value of the artificial intelligence (AI) market in the is expected to reach $1.9bn by 2026, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 36.2%, research shows. The AI market in Middle East is expected to grow significantly in the coming years. According to a report by Research and Markets, the AI market in the Middle East and Africa is expected to grow from $500mn in 2020 to $8.4bn by 2026, representing a CAGR of 47.8%. The UAE is expected to be one of the key markets for AI in the region, with the government and businesses investing heavily in AI initiatives. In 2020, the UAE’s AI market was valued at $290mn, data shows. As adoption of AI into business practices gains ground in the Middle East, business leaders need to clearly understand their data and AI goals, partner where necessary, iterate and experiment, focus on business impact and user experience, and above all, embrace change in the way of work, a leading consulting firm has said. According to a study by Protiviti Middle East, more than 80% of Middle East CEOs believe that AI is critical to the future of their businesses, and over 70% of them are investing in AI. The UAE is one of the most advanced countries in the region regarding AI adoption. Government impetus on UAE’s National Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2031, with its focus on attracting talent for jobs of the future, funding research and innovation hubs, developing of appropriate infrastructure and data ecosystems along with a balanced legislative environment, has reaffirmed UAE’s position as a global hub for AI. Saudi Arabia is also investing heavily in AI. In 2019, the country’s sovereign wealth fund, the Public Investment Fund, announced a $500bn investment in AI and other emerging technologies over the next decade. The government has also launched several AI initiatives. Saudi Arabian Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority and National Data Management Office are driving a national-level transformation towards a data-driven culture in the public and private sectors. (Zawya)

- **Dubai International Chamber facilitates expansion of Dubai companies into foreign markets -** Dubai International Chamber, one of the three chambers operating under the umbrella of Dubai Chambers, successfully concluded its trade mission to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan last week. During the mission, the chamber facilitated over 430 B2B meetings between representatives of 24 Dubai-based companies and their relevant counterparts in these markets. The participating businessmen affirmed that the Dubai Economic Agenda D33 supports their strategies for international expansion, as it enhances their businesses' competitiveness and ability to enter new markets. D33's ambitious goals motivate investors to expand their foreign exports and establish economic partnerships worldwide. Representatives of the Dubai-based private companies stressed the importance of the emirate as a global hub for their business. They underlined that Dubai offers them confidence with its vibrant business ecosystem, which is a key factor in supporting their expansion to global markets from the emirate. Several Dubai-based companies have already succeeded in either concluding deals to grow their exports to these markets or establishing a presence for their operations in these markets. The outcomes of these deals support the objectives of Dubai's economic agenda and align with the chamber's strategic goal to support the expansion of 100 companies from Dubai to foreign markets by the end of 2024. One of the participants, Rashid Assouma, CEO of Homepital, expressed that the chamber's trade mission to Central Asia opened new opportunities in untapped markets for his business. Homepital specializes in remote health care technologies and AI and is currently negotiating deals with prospects to sign several joint agreements soon. Assouma noted that the presence of his company in Dubai offered him a competitive advantage to expand to other markets, including Africa. Additionally, Dubai's D33 economic agenda has given him more confidence and enthusiasm for the future and the expansion of his business in foreign markets. (Zawya)

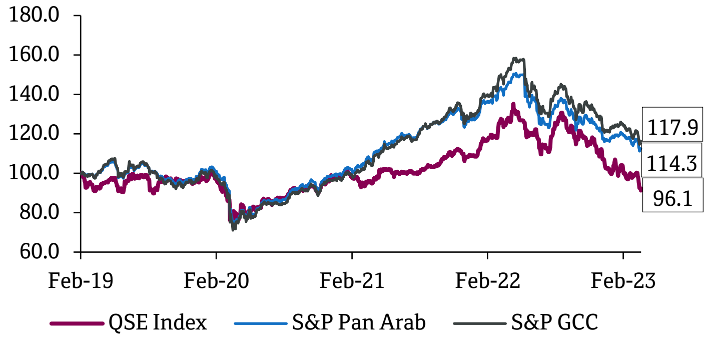
- **UAE's Pension Authority announces early pension disbursements for Q2 2023 -** The General Pension and Social Security Authority (GPSSA) has announced early pension disbursements during the 2nd quarter of 2023, in celebration of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. GPSSA said that the April 2023 pensions will be paid as early as Tuesday 18th April, and May 2023 pensions will be paid on Friday 26th May, whereas the June 2023 pensions will be paid on Friday 23rd June. The UAE’s Pension Authority continues to pay diligent attention to the lives of its customers in par with the UAE government’s continuous humanitarian and social acts. It is worth noting that pensions for the current month of March 2023 amount to AED689,776,900.32, demonstrating an evident increase of AED46,248,072 in comparison to March 2022, during which the value of disbursed pensions amounted to AED643,528,828.09. (Zawya)

- **Corporate tax in UAE will open new vista for investment and growth -** RNG Management Consultancies UAE and Astrazure Legal Services Private Ltd India have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to help the companies and businesses in the UAE to make them ready for the upcoming UAE Corporate Tax Law, to be implemented from June 1, 2023. The companies will work together across several areas including UAE corporate tax law, international taxation, transfer pricing and value added tax (VAT) particularly on tax impact assessments, business structuring, standard operating procedures, IT systems upgrade and Tax compliances. “With the combined capabilities of RNG and Astrazure, customers in UAE will get more cost-effective solution to UAE corporate tax and reduce the risk of non-compliance by having proper implementation before the deadline” said CA Chirag Gupta, Partner, RNG Group. “Introduction of corporate tax will open new opportunity of growth and investment in UAE”, said CA Atul Gupta - Past President ICAI and Board Member IFAC in a recent workshop on “UAE corporate tax and transfer pricing” in Dubai on Februry 18, organized by RNG Management Consultancies, wherein K Kalimuthu, consul (economic, trade & commerce) - Consulate General of India to Dubai was the chief guest. He stressed that open and transparent regime always welcome the new opportunity and UAE corporate tax getting implemented will be a step forward in that direction. Tally Solutions Pvt. Ltd. was the technology partner and Khaleej Times was the media partner for this event. This workshop was addressed by other eminent speakers including CA Harikishan Rankawat, Partner of RNG Auditors, CA Atul Gupta - Past President ICAI & Board Member IFAC and Vikas Panchal, General Manager of Tally Solutions on the convergence of various concepts of corporate tax and technology. Topics like basis of taxation, arm’s length pricing, deductions, tax group and tax losses were deliberated where more than 200 delegates participated from Industry and Profession. On this occasion, TAXO Knowledge Solution was also launched specifically for UAE corporate tax law and transfer pricing. TAXO isa dedicated solution for self-paced learning and specialized knowledge solution, wherein one can learn and deep dive in the corporate tax along with illustration and relevant case laws. Updated interlinked articles with regulations, FAQs, illustrations, diagrams & commentary, cherry pick case laws from global jurisdiction and notification etc. will be available online to users through TAXO e-solution on UAE Corporate Tax under individual articles. TAXO is also facilitating the users to interact with Experts every month so all their queries can be answered. CMA Manoj Kapoor Shared that TAXO is already being used by 1,000+ corporates in India for their different tax learning / compliance needs. You can contact RNG Group on +971-4-2765667 or visit www.RNGauditors.com to know more about their services. (Zawya)

- **Billion-dollar facelift as Bahrain bids to join Gulf boom -** With a multi-billion dollar economic revamp in full swing, tiny Bahrain is vying to keep pace with its Gulf neighbors after more than a decade beset by political unrest. It's a difficult path for the island nation that is a neighbor to gas-rich Qatar and connected by a causeway to Saudi Arabia, a key ally and the world's biggest oil exporter. The United Arab Emirates, another regional powerhouse with well-developed trade, tourism and financial industries alongside its large oil sector, is just a short flight away. Bahrain has witnessed turbulence since 2011 but has since begun a modernizing facelift, instigating economic and fiscal reforms. Extensive land reclamations are literally changing the shape of the country, while a host of gleaming new buildings dot the skyline and cranes work above nascent housing developments. The small, non-OPEC oil producer is seeking to decrease its reliance on its oil sector which accounts for 80% of revenues, much of that from refining. "The principles are clear: We want to grow. We want to grow faster than the world," Khalid Ibrahim Humaidan, head of the government's Economic Development Board, told reporters this month in Manama, the capital. An unexpected boost could come from the announcement of diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran. "In an optimistic scenario, the Saudi-Iran rapprochement would gather pace and create a more conducive environment for political conciliation within Bahrain which in turn could derisk the economy," Gulf economist Justin Alexander, director of consultancy group Khalij Economics, told AFP. Bahrain, a monarchy whose cabinet is appointed by the king, boasts a rich commercial tradition dating back to its days as a flourishing pearling center. Consisting of one large island and about 30 smaller ones, it was a British protectorate until 1971, becoming a financial hub that initially led its neighbors in terms of economic diversification. Increased regional competition, mainly from Dubai and Doha, but also political instability and economic challenges, especially after global oil prices plunged in 2014, have all hurt Bahrain. In 2018, wealthier Gulf countries agreed to support Bahrain's economic goals with $10bn in loans, giving rise to the current building spree. As well as land reclamations for new housing projects and skyscrapers around Manama, Bahrain is building diving centers including an underwater park. A new $1bn passenger terminal at its international airport opened last year, doubling annual capacity to 14mn passengers. Bahrain has also built one of the region's biggest conference centers, aiming to attract international events and visitors. (Zawya)

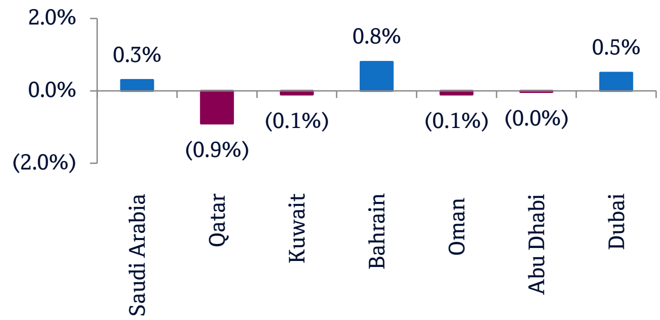
- **Bahrain's real GDP grows 4.9% in 2022; hits 10-year high -** Bahrain's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew 4.9% in 2022, the highest rate since 2013, mainly driven by non-oil GDP growth and greater private sector contribution towards economic activities, said a senior minister, citing the kingdom’s annual economic report. "We are now on the right track to implement all its plans, programs and priorities aimed at supporting economic growth and advanced development paths," remarked Minister of Finance and National Economy, Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa. He was speaking at a virtual meeting of the editors-in-chief of local newspapers, with whom he reviewed the economic results for the year 2022 and the positive indicators they contained, reported BnA. This will enhance growth for the homeland and benefit the citizens, in light of the comprehensive development process, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and supported by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, he stated, stressing the importance of harnessing all potentials, stepping up joint efforts and continuing to build on the promising development achievements attained thanks to the will and determination of Team Bahrain. The economic report revealed that Bahrain had witnessed 6.2% non-oil Real GDP growth, the highest rate since 2012 and in excess of the 5% annual target set by the Kingdom’s Economic Recovery Plan. Launched in 2021, the multi-year, five-pillar plan aims to enhance the economy’s long-term competitiveness and support post-Covid-19 recovery. It is one of Bahrain’s largest ever reform programs, with over $30bn catalyzed for investment and significant labor market and regulatory reform to improve the ease of doing business. The kingdom also reported a drop in Deficit to GDP to -1.1%, a drop in Debt to GDP to 100%, and a primary surplus of 3.3%, reported BnA. At the meeting, Shaikh Salman praised the prominent and important role played by the private sector as a key and active partner in developing economic sectors and increasing economic diversification. The implementation of all specific initiatives and programs aimed at achieving the desired economic growth and financial sustainability will continue, he stated. Shaikh Salman emphasized that the kingdom was committed to implementing the Fiscal Balance Program, which aims to reach the point of financial balance between expenditures and revenues by 2024, in a way that contributes to achieving financial sustainability and economic growth. Commending the media for its pioneering role in nation-building and development, the minister said: "Tremendous efforts have been exerted by the highly-professional competencies of the local press to achieve the desired goals and aspirations and bring about further development and prosperity for the benefit of the kingdom." He also commended the positive results achieved, which reflects Team Bahrain’s success in implementing all the main priorities and objectives on which the Economic Recovery Plan was based. (Zawya)

Rebased Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Daily Index Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Asset/Currency Performance	Close ($)	1D%	WTD%	YTD%
Gold/Ounce	1964.70	-0.45	-0.68	7.71
Silver/Ounce	23.34	0.00	0.46	-2.59
Crude Oil (Brent)/Barrel (FM Future)	78.28	-0.47	4.39	-8.88
Crude Oil (WTI)/Barrel (FM Future)	72.97	-0.31	5.36	-9.08
Natural Gas (Henry Hub)/MMBtu	1.94	-3.96	-4.90	-44.89
LPG Propane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	79.80	1.79	5.98	12.79
LPG Butane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	88.50	0.80	12.74	-12.81
Euro	1.08	-0.01	0.78	1.30
Yen	132.86	1.51	1.63	1.33
GBP	1.23	-0.23	0.66	1.91
CHF	1.09	0.16	0.15	0.66
AUD	0.67	-0.37	0.59	-1.89
USD Index	102.64	0.21	-0.46	-0.85
RUB	110.69	0.00	0.00	58.90
BRL	0.19	0.57	2.15	2.91

Source: Bloomberg

Global Indices Performance	Close	1D%*	WTD%*	YTD%*
MSCI World Index	2,739.42	0.0	0.5	3.8
DJ Industrial	3,2717.6	1.0	0.5	(2.3)
S&P 500	4,027.81	1.4	0.0	3.4
NASDAQ 100	11,926.24	1.9	(0.9)	10.0
STOXX 600	450.21	1.3	1.7	5.9
DAX	15,328.78	1.2	2.0	10.1
FTSE 100	7,564.27	1.1	2.0	2.5
CAC 40	7,186.99	1.4	1.8	10.8
Nikkei	27,883.78	(0.8)	0.3	5.5
MSCI EM	980.14	0.0	(0.2)	1.5
SHANGHAI SE Composite	3,240.057	0.2	(0.7)	5.4
HANG SENG	20,192.4	0.1	(0.7)	(0.6)
BSE SENSEX	57,960.09	0.6	0.4	(4.3)
Bovespa	101,792.5	0.6	4.2	(5.2)
RTS	1004.56	0.0	2.3	3.0

Source: Bloomberg ($ adjusted returns,)*

Contacts

QNB Financial Services Co. W.L.L.
Contact Center: (+974) 4476 6666
info@qnbfs.com.qa
Doha, Qatar

Saugata Sarkar, CFA, CAIA
Head of Research
saugata.sarkar@qnbfs.com.qa

Shahan Keushgerian
Senior Research Analyst
shahan.keushgerian@qnbfs.com.qa

Phibion Makuwerere, CFA
Senior Research Analyst
phibion.makuwerere@qnbfs.com.qa

Roy Thomas
Senior Research Analyst
roy.thomas@qnbfs.com.qa

Dana Saif Al Sowaidi
Research Analyst
dana.alsowaidi@qnbfs.com.qa