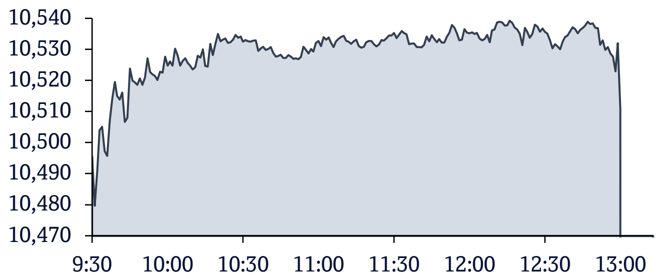
QSE Intra-Day Movement



Qatar Commentary

The QE Index rose 0.1% to close at 10,510.9. Gains were led by the Real Estate and Banks & Financial Services indices, gaining 0.6% and 0.4%, respectively. Top gainers were Gulf Warehousing Company and Al Khaleej Takaful Insurance Co., rising 2.5% and 2.3%, respectively. Among the top losers, Widam Food Company fell 1.3%, while Qatar Islamic Insurance Company was down 1.0%.

GCC Commentary

Saudi Arabia: The TASI Index fell 0.4% to close at 12,149.2. Losses were led by the Utilities and Commercial & Professional Svc indices, falling 2.7% and 1.0%, respectively. Jahez International Company for Information System Technology declined 7.2%, while Anaam International Holding Group was down 7.0%.

Dubai: The DFM Index fell marginally to close at 4,795.3. The Utilities and the Consumer Discretionary indices both declined 1.1% and 1.0%, respectively. Orascom Construction fell 9.9%, while Takaful Emarat was down 9.7%.

Abu Dhabi: The ADX General Index gained 0.2% to close at 9,270.6. The Energy and Real Estate indices rose 1.5% each. Sharjah Cement and Industrial Development Co Equity rose 8.0%, while Umm Al Qaiwain General Investment Co was up 4.1%.

Kuwait: The Kuwait All Share Index gained 0.1% to close at 7,325.5. The Consumer Services index rose 2.1%, while the Telecommunications index gained 1.0%. OSOUL Investment Co. rose 21.7%, while Kuwait and Middle East Financial Investment Co. was up 9.2%.

Oman: The MSM 30 Index fell 0.3% to close at 4,517.2. Losses were led by the Industrial and Services indices, falling 0.6% and 0.5%, respectively. Raysut Cement Company declined 6.5%, while OQ Exploration and Production was down 5.3%.

Bahrain: The BHB Index fell 0.2% to close at 2,012.0. National Bank of Bahrain declined 1.1%, while Al Salam Bank was down 1.0%.

Market Indicators	11 Dec 24	10 Dec 24	%Chg.
Value Traded (QR mn)	397.7	404.4	(1.6)
Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn)	620,751.6	618,883.6	0.3
Volume (mn)	159.1	138.3	15.0
Number of Transactions	14,482	14,597	(0.8)
Companies Traded	52	50	4.0
Market Breadth	29:18	32:15	–

Market Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	YTD%	TTM P/E
Total Return	23,970.33	0.1	1.1	3.1	11.4
All Share Index	3,758.20	0.3	1.1	3.5	11.9
Banks	4,711.38	0.4	1.2	2.9	10.1
Industrials	4,193.98	(0.0)	1.2	1.9	15.0
Transportation	5,184.50	0.2	1.1	21.0	12.8
Real Estate	1,634.67	0.6	0.9	8.9	20.2
Insurance	2,335.60	(0.1)	0.7	(11.3)	167.0
Telecoms	1,821.21	(0.4)	(0.2)	6.8	11.6
Consumer Goods and Services	7,620.47	0.2	0.9	0.6	16.8
Al Rayan Islamic Index	4,845.75	(0.0)	1.0	1.7	14.0

GCC Top Gainers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Dallah Healthcare Co.	Saudi Arabia	162.60	3.3	187.1	(5.4)
ADNOC Logistics & Services	Abu Dhabi	5.90	3.0	3,736.6	35.5
Rabigh Refining & Petro.	Saudi Arabia	8.40	2.9	4,491.0	(18.8)
ADNOC Drilling Co	Abu Dhabi	5.80	2.7	9,047.4	53.4
Riyadh Cables Group Co	Saudi Arabia	144.60	2.3	230.2	56.2

GCC Top Losers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Acwa Power Co.	Saudi Arabia	383.20	(3.2)	239.2	49.4
Dubai Electricity & Water Auth	Dubai	2.70	(1.4)	13,804.0	10.6
Etihad Etisalat Co.	Saudi Arabia	54.50	(1.4)	654.6	11.1
National Shipping Co.	Saudi Arabia	27.35	(1.4)	142.5	24.0
Sahara Int. Petrochemical	Saudi Arabia	25.00	(1.4)	1,314.4	(26.6)

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%
Gulf Warehousing Company	3.243	2.5	1,995.2	3.5
Al Khaleej Takaful Insurance Co.	2.422	2.3	5,025.2	(18.5)
Inma Holding	3.900	2.1	645.2	(6.0)
Meeza QSTP	3.274	1.7	605.5	14.1
Barwa Real Estate Company	2.840	1.4	5,831.5	(1.9)

QSE Top Losers	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Widam Food Company	2.542	(1.3)	732.9	7.7
Qatar Islamic Insurance Company	8.600	(1.0)	615.4	(3.4)
Qatar Islamic Bank	20.88	(1.0)	787.6	(2.9)
Vodafone Qatar	1.850	(0.9)	1,427.9	(3.0)
National Leasing	0.793	(0.8)	3,243.8	8.8

QSE Top Volume Trades	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co.	1.249	0.1	25,414.2	(10.8)
Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Dev.	0.594	0.5	13,634.0	(17.8)
Ezdan Holding Group	1.129	(0.3)	11,130.1	31.6
Estithmar Holding	1.805	1.4	8,851.0	(13.8)
Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding	1.515	0.5	8,533.9	(15.3)

QSE Top Value Trades	Close*	1D%	Val. '000	YTD%
Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co.	1.249	0.1	31,839.1	(10.8)
Dukhan Bank	3.577	0.988	28,512.8	(10.0)
QNB Group	17.38	1.0	27,137.1	5.1
Ooredoo	11.70	(0.3)	23,496.6	2.6
Masraf Al Rayan	2.484	0.526	20,338.4	(6.4)

Regional Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%	Exch. Val. Traded ($ mn)	Exchange Mkt. Cap. ($ mn)	P/E**	P/B**	Dividend Yield
Qatar*	10,510.88	0.1	1.1	0.9	(3.0)	109.54	170,210.1	11.4	1.3	4.1
Dubai	4,795.32	0.0	(0.5)	(1.1)	18.1	141.98	226,916.6	9.2	1.4	5.0
Abu Dhabi	9,270.55	0.2	(0.1)	0.4	(3.2)	285.89	724,869.6	16.6	2.5	2.2
Saudi Arabia	12,149.19	(0.4)	1.8	4.4	1.5	1,615.07	2,767,737.4	19.6	2.3	3.7
Kuwait	7,325.53	0.1	0.5	1.1	7.5	210.67	155,086.1	18.7	1.7	4.0
Oman	4,517.21	(0.3)	(1.2)	(1.0)	0.1	13.06	30,298.4	11.2	0.9	5.9
Bahrain	2,011.95	(0.2)	(1.2)	(1.0)	2.1	5.23	20,710.6	16.3	1.3	3.6

*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 0.1% to close at 10,510.9. The Real Estate and Banks & Financial Services indices led the gains. The index rose on the back of buying support from GCC and Foreign shareholders despite selling pressure from Qatari and Arab shareholders.
- Gulf Warehousing Company and Al Khaleej Takaful Insurance Co. were the top gainers, rising 2.5% and 2.3%, respectively. Among the top losers, Widam Food Company fell 1.3%, while Qatar Islamic Insurance Company was down 1.0%.
- Volume of shares traded on Wednesday rose by 15.0% to 159.1mn from 138.3mn on Tuesday. Further, as compared to the 30-day moving average of 129.2mn, volume for the day was 23.1% higher. Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co. and Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Dev. were the most active stocks, contributing 16.0% and 8.6% to the total volume, respectively.

Overall Activity	Buy%*	Sell%*	Net (QR)
Qatari Individuals	24.57%	32.39%	(31,079,738.22)
Qatari Institutions	39.29%	35.68%	14,338,565.47
Qatari	**63.86%**	**68.07%**	**(16,741,172.75)**
GCC Individuals	0.11%	0.30%	(775,410.61)
GCC Institutions	3.37%	2.45%	3,629,521.95
GCC	**3.47%**	**2.75%**	**2,854,111.34**
Arab Individuals	9.38%	10.80%	(5,642,523.47)
Arab Institutions	0.03%	0.00%	110,021.55
Arab	**9.41%**	**10.80%**	**(5,532,501.92)**
Foreigners Individuals	2.33%	3.14%	(3,221,027.01)
Foreigners Institutions	20.93%	15.24%	22,640,590.34
Foreigners	**23.26%**	**18.38%**	**19,419,563.34**

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

Global Economic Data and Earnings Calendar

Global Economic Data

Date	Market	Source	Indicator	Period	Actual	Consensus	Previous
11-12	US	Mortgage Bankers Association	MBA Mortgage Applications	06-Dec	5.40%	NA	2.80%
11-12	US	Bureau of Labor Statistics	CPI MoM	Nov	0.30%	0.30%	0.20%
11-12	US	Bureau of Labor Statistics	CPI Ex Food and Energy MoM	Nov	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%
11-12	US	Bureau of Labor Statistics	CPI YoY	Nov	2.70%	2.70%	2.60%
11-12	US	Bureau of Labor Statistics	CPI Ex Food and Energy YoY	Nov	3.30%	3.30%	3.30%
11-12	US	Bureau of Labor Statistics	CPI Index NSA	Nov	315.493	315.337	315.664
11-12	US	Bureau of Labor Statistics	CPI Core Index SA	Nov	322.657	322.486	321.666
11-12	US	US Treasury	Federal Budget Balance	Nov	-$366.8b	-$356.5b	-$314.0b
11-12	Japan	Bank of Japan	PPI YoY	Nov	3.70%	3.40%	3.60%
11-12	Japan	Bank of Japan	PPI MoM	Nov	0.30%	0.20%	0.30%

Earnings Calendar

Tickers	Company Name	Date of reporting 4Q2024 results	No. of days remaining	Status
FALH*	Al Faleh Educational Holding	16-Dec-24	5	Due
BEMA	Damaan Islamic Insurance Company	26-Jan-25	47	Due

(1Q 2025 result)*

Qatar

- **Gulf Warehousing Co.: The EGM Endorses items on its agenda -** Gulf Warehousing Co. announces the results of the EGM. The meeting was held on 10/12/2024 and the following resolution were approved 1. Approve and authorize the raising of finance through the issuance of any Sharia compliant sukuk, trust certificates and/or other similar instruments which are not convertible into shares (“Sukuk”), whether under a program, through standalone issuances or otherwise, and whether senior or subordinated to other debts of the Company, and whether listed and/or admitted to trading on a stock exchange or any other trading platform and/or unlisted, in an aggregate face amount not exceeding Qatari Riyal 2,000,000,000 (or its equivalent in other currencies) (the “Sukuk Financing Limit”) at any time. The Sukuk Financing Limit shall apply to all outstanding issuances pursuant to 2 and 3 below. 2. Approve and authorize: (i) the establishment of a Sharia compliant sukuk and/or trust certificates program in an aggregate outstanding face amount not exceeding, including the aggregate face amount of the Standalone Sukuk (as defined below), the Sukuk Financing Limit (the “Program”); (ii) issuances of Sukuk (in one or more tranches or Series) under the Program; and (iii) updates of the Program from time to time. 3. Approve and authorize the issuance of standalone Sukuk which are not convertible into shares in an aggregate face amount not exceeding, including any Sukuk issued under the Program, the Sukuk Financing Limit (the “Standalone Sukuk”). The Standalone Sukuk may be, without limitation, senior or subordinated and may include profit deferment or non-payment events. 4. Resolve that each of the establishment of the Program, any update of the Program, any issuance of Sukuk under the Program and the issuance of the Standalone Sukuk (together, the “Transactions”) is in the best commercial interests of the Company and to approve the entry by the Company into (and the execution and delivery of, and the performance by the Company of its obligations under) all agreements and documents necessary to implement the establishment of the Program, any update of the Program, any issuance of Sukuk under the Program and the issuance of the Standalone Sukuk, as may be amended, supplemented, novated or restated from time to time, as well as the preparation, publication and distribution to investors of any offering circulars or prospectuses relating to the Program (including any update thereof) and/or the Standalone Sukuk (together, the “Transaction Documents”). 5. Resolve that each of the Chairman and the Managing Director of the Company be appointed as an authorized signatory (each an “authorized signatory”) and be authorized individually to: (i) determine and agree, without limitation, the date, tenor, terms, amount, status, offering mechanism, issuer (including a direct or indirect (through a special purpose vehicle company) issuance), transaction structure, the underlying Sharia structure, listing (if any). (QSE)
- **Salam International: Board of directors meeting results -** Salam International announces the results of its Board of Directors meeting held on 11/12/2024 and approved: the Board of Directors followed up on the implementation of previous resolutions, continued the evaluation of the Company's current projects, and the execution of the plans of the subsidiaries and business units. The Board approved the estimated budget of the Company and its subsidiaries for the fiscal year 2025. (QSE)

- **QatarEnergy awards Time Charter Party agreements for 6 ultra-modern QC-Max LNG vessels -** QatarEnergy has selected the joint venture of Japan's Mitsui OSK Lines (MOL) and China's COSCO Shipping LNG Investment (Shanghai - CSLNG) to own and operate six QC-Max size LNG vessels. The six vessels will be built in China by Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding Group, a subsidiary of China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC). These vessels are the last batch of the 128 LNG vessels in QatarEnergy's historic ship building program, made up of 104 conventional and 24 QC-Max size ultra-modern vessels. The long-term Time Charter Party (TCP) agreements were awarded to the shipowners during a special ceremony held at QatarEnergy's headquarters under the patronage of HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, who is also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy. Taking part in the ceremony were Takeshi Hashimoto, President & Chief Executive Officer of MOL and Zhang Feng, Vice-President of China COSCO Shipping Corporation (the parent company of CSLNG), in the presence of senior executives from both shipowners as well as QatarEnergy and QatarEnergy LNG. In remarks at the ceremony, al-Kaabi said: "This is the last batch of long-term shipowner contracts in our 128-vessel strong historic shipbuilding program that will cater for QatarEnergy's future LNG fleet requirements for our LNG expansion projects, as well as the replacement requirements of some of our existing fleet." The minister added: "We are proud to have forged very important partnerships and business relations with many companies and joint ventures including today's new partnership with MOL and COSCO Shipping." The MOL-CSLNG joint venture has already entered long-term TCP agreements with QatarEnergy for seven conventional LNG vessels, executed in 2022, giving the joint venture a total of 13 long-term TCPs under QatarEnergy's LNG fleet expansion program. (Gulf Times)
- **Qatar November foreign reserves at QR254.74bn -** Qatar's foreign reserves were QR254.74bn in November, according to the Qatar Central Bank. (Bloomberg)
- **FT: Qatar's Sovereign Wealth Fund plans to target bigger deals -** Qatar Investment Authority expects to "do bigger-ticket deals" and invest with "more frequency", the Financial Times reports, citing its chief executive Mohammed Al Sowaidi. No plans to be a majority shareholder or operator of the companies in which it invests. Fund is bullish on the US as well as in the UK and Asia with a focus on technology, artificial intelligence, healthcare, real estate and infrastructure. Also looking to build up its offices in the US and Singapore. QIA has been expanding its investments in China and continued to look to invest in the Asian country while "also respecting the regulations". (Bloomberg)
- **QDB launches its new strategy for 2025-2030 -** CEO of Qatar Development Bank (QDB) Abdulrahman bin Hesham al-Sowaidi revealed that the QDB launched its new strategy for 2025-2030, which is in line with the objectives of the State of Qatar's Third National Strategy. In his remarks to Qatar News Agency (QNA), the QDB CEO said that the new strategy aims to support the private sector by empowering the role of all actors in the business system, while maintaining the bank's services in financing, guiding, and training the private sector and providing incubation and acceleration for emerging projects and innovative ideas. He indicated that QDB's strategy 2025-2030 was designed in line with the Third National Development Strategy. He said that the strategy to have a positive impact in this regard and contribute directly to achieving the goals of the third National Development Strategy, which will help enhance the economic sustainability and development of the State of Qatar. He noted that through the new strategy, QDB intends to move from the stage of direct support to the stage of empowerment, whether for the entrepreneurship system or for partners, as the strategy focuses on diversifying the methods of support provided by the bank, enhancing the use of available resources to address new goals related to environmental, social and institutional governance and digital transformation goals, and enhancing innovation and creativity, while establishing the best partnerships capable of facilitating access to these targets. Regarding supporting innovation, he said that QDB has always paid attention to the importance of innovation and creativity and stressed the need to support and enhance it in the Qatari entrepreneurship environment. He explained that QDB has sought to support innovation in the past through several initiatives and programs that search for innovators in the national business environment and their projects, and support and develop them. He said that the bank has also always encouraged the adoption of a culture of creative thinking and free entrepreneurial work through its various initiatives and services. He added that in the new strategy, QDB will continue its role in supporting innovation, whether through direct or indirect investment, or by incubating and accelerating innovative businesses. QDB will develop the innovation support pillar by supporting early-stage startups to serve priority economic clusters stipulated in the Third National Development Strategy, such as future manufacturing industries, logistics services, and the tourism sector, in addition to the education sector, financial technology, information technology and digital services, as well as agricultural technology projects, health services, and green technology. He said that QDB will expand its customer base to include all international start-ups wishing to establish a local presence in the State of Qatar. Through the new strategy, the management of specialized business incubators and accelerators will be transferred to experts and specialists from the private sector and partners, enabling them to do so, while continuing to manage a comprehensive business incubator and accelerator for priority specializations and sectors at this stage. He pointed out that QDB will work to increase the volume of investments in the founding stages of companies by 24% annually and raise the public sector's contribution to venture investment in Qatar to 30% by 2030, which the Third National Development Strategy aims to reach QR1bn. To achieve this, QDB will further diversify its product offering by increasing investment volume, expanding co-investment to include pre-seed and seed stage companies, supporting angel investment networks, and capital guarantees. With regards to the local business development pillar, the CEO of QDB said that the bank will expand its client base benefiting from the bank's financial and non-financial services, to include all Qatar-based companies and those registered with the Qatar Free Zones Authority. Al-Sowaidi added that QDB will enhance its indirect finance services by collaborating with financial institutions in Qatar, indicating that the next phase will focus on offering indirect financing options to companies that have demonstrated financial management maturity, with this service comprising 25% of the bank's total financing. The CEO of QDB said that the bank will focus on providing comprehensive and seamless services to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), thus, putting companies at the center of all QDB services, which will involve conducting company situation analysis, followed by tailoring a comprehensive service package accordingly, which will include consultation and financial services in line with a company's needs. According to the new strategy, QDB will set a financing ceiling at QR70mn per company and QR200mn per group, not applicable however to export companies and the food security sector. Furthermore, the bank will also offer new solutions for companies that require financing beyond the mentioned ceilings, through collaborations with local commercial banks via indirect financing and joint ventures. The CEO of QDB said that thanks to the bank's new strategy, at least 50% of QDB's financing customers will receive non-financial advisory support through customer-tailored service packages. With regards to export trade financing, al-Sowaidi said that the new strategy seeks to turn QDB into the private sector's gateway to global markets. As part of the bank's ongoing efforts to support the export sector, the CEO of QDB said that it has already begun adjusting its programs and launched the new trademark 'Qatar Exports' through its Export Development, Finance, and Promotion Agency — Tasdeer, to enhance the competitiveness of Qatari products and enable their presence in global markets. Al-Sowaidi added that QDB's new strategy aims to expand the bank's client base beyond Qatari exporters to also include international buyers of Qatari exporters' goods and services. In this regard, he said that the bank has set a credit limit exceeding QR2bn for international buyers to date, in addition to providing preferential services to companies operating in priority economic zones in accordance with the Third National Development Strategy. Al-Sowaidi added that QDB will work on expanding Qatari industries and services' global reach through export promotion offices worldwide, targeting priority markets. He continued that regional and international offices will be established under the 'Qatar Exports' brand, with the first regional office already having been established in Saudi Arabia. These efforts will contribute to doubling the export volume of SMEs in Qatar, reaching a minimum of QR2.3bn by 2030, representing 3.6% of the country's non-hydrocarbon exports. (Gulf Times)

- **Qatar Chamber pitches for strengthening Arab-French trade ties -** Qatar Chamber (QC) on Wednesday said Doha is keen to explore opportunities available across various sectors in France, as part of strengthening Arab-French trade relations. Addressing the recent Arab-French Chamber of Commerce board meeting held in the French capital, Paris; QC chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani said trade exchange between the two countries reached QR9.2bn last year. The chamber's delegation included Dr Khalid bin Klefeekh al-Hajri, a board member. Sheikh Khalifa praised the growing economic and commercial relations between Arab countries and France, emphasizing the importance of such meetings among member chambers to further strengthen these ties. Reaffirming QC's commitment to enhancing co-operation between the business sectors of both countries, he described France as an important trade partner and said the Qatari investors are keen to explore opportunities available in France across various sectors. He further emphasized the chamber's encouragement for French companies to expand their investments in Qatar. (Gulf Times)
- **MoECC, QIC sign MoU to develop plant environment and combat desertification -** The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) signed yesterday a memorandum of understanding with Qatar Insurance Company (QIC), to enhance cooperation in developing the plant environment and combating desertification, within the framework of Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy. The agreement was signed by Undersecretary of MoECC Eng. Abdulaziz bin Ahmad bin Abdullah Al Mahmoud, and Group CEO of Qatar Insurance Company, Salem Khalaf Al Mannai. This memorandum comes to confirm the importance of the partnership between state institutions and the private sector to achieve the goals of the National Development Strategy and work to implement it. Eng. Al Mahmoud stressed that the memorandum of understanding reflects the ministry's orientation towards enhancing cooperation with the private sector, which contributes to protecting the environment, preserving biodiversity, and developing the vegetation cover, to achieve the state's vision in combating desertification, which is supervised by the Protection and Natural Reserves Sector. He stressed the importance of the national role of the private sector as a key partner in achieving sustainable environmental development. For his part, Al Mannai pointed out the importance of enhancing the social responsibility of the private sector in the State of Qatar by supporting national environmental projects that aim to achieve environmental sustainability for future generations. He stressed the need to achieve a balance between economic and social development and environmental protection, as it is a national heritage that must be preserved and developed. The MoU covers several areas of collaboration, including combating desertification, implementing projects to develop plant environments through the planting and maintenance of saplings, and utilizing them in the rehabilitation of wild pastures. This initiative aligns with the national efforts to support initiatives that protect wildlife and enhance biodiversity in the country. This step reflects Qatar's ongoing commitment to environmental development and the promotion of sustainable practices, through partnerships between the public and private sectors. It aims to achieve a balance between economic and social development and environmental protection, while advancing the country's goals for ecosystem rehabilitation in line with the Qatar National Vision. (Qatar Tribune)
- **PM launches National Food Security Strategy 2030 -** HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani inaugurated Wednesday the National Food Security Strategy 2030. The inauguration ceremony was attended by HE Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah, a number of ministers, and senior officials in the Ministry of Municipality and the authorities concerned in the country. The ceremony included a visual presentation of Qatar's National Food Security Strategy, its most important programs, and the goals it seeks to achieve within the objectives and pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030. The new strategy aims to achieve sustainable food security through guiding principles that include promoting healthy and consumer habits, ensuring food safety and quality, sustainability, adaptation to climate change, and building effective partnerships. The Cabinet Wednesday commended the National Food Security Strategy 2030, inaugurated by HE the Prime Minister, under the slogan "Resilient, Sustainable, and Fair Food System by 2030." The National Food Security Strategy 2030 is based on three main pillars that ensure the sustainability of food security in the state: local production, marketing, strategic reserves, early warning systems, and international trade for investment. This strategy thus represents a solid foundation for ensuring food security in Qatar, HE Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi said in a statement. (Gulf Times)
- **Minister of Municipality: National Food Security Strategy 2030 to bolster Qatar's capabilities to face challenges -** The inauguration of the National Food Security Strategy 2030 represents a pivotal step in the process of enhancing Qatar's ability to face current and future challenges in the field of food security, Minister of Municipality HE Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Attiyah has said, noting that this strategy reflects the vision of the wise leadership towards achieving sustainable development and enhancing food security. In his remarks during the strategy's inauguration ceremony on Wednesday, the minister said, "Qatar prioritizes the agriculture and agricultural production sector, as it is one of the main pillars for achieving economic diversification and ensuring agricultural sustainability." He pointed out that the third national development strategy included a special axis on food and agriculture, aiming to develop sustainable agricultural technologies and increase local production, which contributes to rationalizing resource consumption and enhancing food security. Qatar has been keen to support local farm owners by launching various initiatives and agricultural support programs, which have contributed to increasing the volume and quality of local agricultural production and enhancing the position of Qatari crops in the markets, he said. "Qatar has also worked to develop a sustainable and flexible food system that keeps pace with global changes to ensure safe and sustainable food supplies, based on the consideration of food security as a basic right that enhances societal stability." Attiyah pointed out that the National Food Security Strategy 2018-2023 contributed to developing the local food system and enhancing the country's ability to deal with global crises such as climate change, geopolitical crises, and supply chain disruptions, highlighting the importance of formulating flexible national strategies to deal with these challenges. He highlighted that the new strategy is based on three main pillars. The first pillar is local production and local markets, which includes enhancing local production using modern and sustainable technologies to meet market needs. The second pillar is strategic reserves and early warning systems, which includes ensuring the continuity of food supplies in times of crisis by establishing food reserves and developing early warning systems. The third pillar is international trade and investment, which includes diversifying food supply sources by strengthening trade relations and strategic partnerships with producing countries. The minister also noted that the strategy includes a series of initiatives to address the challenges facing farm and estate owners, including improving pricing mechanisms and developing procedures to protect local products and increase their competitiveness against imported products, which contributes to enhancing the economic returns of local producers. He emphasized that achieving the goals of the National Food Security Strategy 2030 requires concerted efforts and continuous coordination between all concerned parties in the country. He expressed confidence that Qatar, thanks to the directives of its wise leadership, will continue to achieve pioneering steps towards sustainable food security that meets the needs of the present and the future. (Qatar Tribune)
- **Cabinet approves laws regulating publications -** The Cabinet on Wednesday approved, in principle, a draft law regulating the press, publications, and publishing; a draft law regulating the practice of advertising, public relations, artistic works, and artistic production activities; and a draft law regulating and managing cinema and theater exhibition houses. These draft laws, prepared by the Ministry of Culture, aim to establish a comprehensive legal framework for activities such as advertising across various media, journalism, artistic production, and the establishment and management of cinema and theater exhibition houses. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani chaired the Cabinet's regular meeting held at its seat at the Amiri Diwan on Wednesday. After the meeting, HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet

Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali Al Mohannadi issued the following statement: At the beginning of the meeting, the Cabinet extended its highest congratulations and greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on the occasion of the upcoming National Day. The Cabinet also congratulated the honorable Qatari people on this glorious occasion, recalling with great appreciation and gratitude the historical role of the Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, expressing pride in the comprehensive developmental renaissance achieved by the state under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, which has elevated Qatar's regional and international standing. The Cabinet praised the outcomes of the state visit made by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to the friendly United Kingdom from December 2 to 4, at the invitation of King Charles III. The Cabinet affirmed that the warm reception accorded to His Highness the Amir, the fruitful official talks His Highness held with the Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and the agreements and memoranda of understanding reached, as well as the wide attention the visit received, reflected the deep and solid historical relations between the two countries and their mutual commitment to developing and enhancing these ties. The Cabinet noted the joint statement issued at the conclusion of the visit, which laid the foundation for a new phase in the relations between the two countries, including important content and future directions to enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields and develop their strategic partnership for the benefit of both nations and their friendly peoples. The Cabinet also commended the National Food Security Strategy 2030, inaugurated on Wednesday by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, under the slogan "Resilient, Sustainable, and Fair Food System by 2030." The National Food Security Strategy 2030 is based on three main pillars that ensure the sustainability of food security in the state: local production, marketing, strategic reserves, early warning systems, and international trade for investment. This strategy thus represents a solid foundation for ensuring food security in the State of Qatar. The Cabinet then considered the topics on its agenda. It took note of the Shura Council's approval of a draft law amending some provisions of Law No. (16) of 2018 regarding the regulation of non-Qatari ownership and use of real estate. The draft law aims to transfer the affiliation of the Committee for Non-Qatari Real Estate Ownership and Utilization from the Ministry of Justice to the Real Estate Regulatory Authority. The Cabinet also approved, in principle, a draft law regulating the press, publications, and publishing; a draft law regulating the practice of advertising, public relations, artistic works, and artistic production activities; and a draft law regulating and managing cinema and theater exhibition houses. These draft laws, prepared by the Ministry of Culture, aim to establish a comprehensive legal framework for activities such as advertising across various media, journalism, artistic production, and the establishment and management of cinema and theater exhibition houses. Furthermore, the Cabinet approved, in principle, a draft Amiri decision to establish the rawda award for excellence in social work. The award aims to consolidate, develop, and encourage the culture of social work in Qatar, enhance community values, and encourage public and private sectors, along with all segments of society, to compete for leadership in community service in all its aspects. This will be achieved by recognizing outstanding achievements and efforts of all contributors toward the social development pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030. The Cabinet decided that the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers should provide the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau with copies of the draft laws and the Amiri decision, so they can be presented on the "Sharek" platform for ten days to gather any views and observations. These comments will then be sent to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. In addition, the Cabinet approved, in principle, a draft decision by the Council of Ministers to amend some provisions of Council of Ministers Decision No. (11) of 2009 regarding the reorganization of the Permanent Population Committee. The draft decision aims to align the committee's status and composition with the provisions of Amiri Decision No. (13) of 2024, which established the National Planning Council. The Cabinet also approved the State of Qatar's accession to the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH). It also approved a draft agreement on mutual legal and judicial assistance in criminal matters between the Government of the State of Qatar and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; a basic contribution agreement between Qatar Fund for Development and the International Committee of the Red Cross for the 2024 institutional appeal; and a draft memorandum of understanding on political consultations on matters of mutual interest between the Government of the State of Qatar and the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The Council concluded its meeting by reviewing two reports and took the appropriate decisions regarding them. These included a report on the results of the Qatari delegation's participation, chaired by HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, in the One Planet Network Forum, and a report on the results of HE the Minister of Labor's participation in the 10th meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Ministers of Labor Committee. (Gulf Times)

International

- **US consumer prices post largest rise in seven months; rents finally slowing -** US consumer prices increased in November by the most in seven months, but the Federal Reserve was still expected to deliver a third consecutive interest rate cut next week to support a labor market that has been cooling. Progress in lowering inflation toward the U.S. central bank's 2% target has virtually stalled, with the report from the Labor Department on Wednesday also showing no improvement in the measure of underlying price pressures over the past four months. Despite persistently high inflation, there was some encouraging news. Rents, one of the stickier components of inflation, rose at the slowest pace in nearly 3-1/2 years. The rise in motor vehicle insurance, another troublesome category, moderated. These factors slowed the increase in services inflation. A sustained cooling trend would bode well for the inflation outlook, though looming tariffs from the President-elect Donald Trump's incoming administration pose a threat. "Some Fed officials will likely take solace in the improvement in services and housing inflation," said Scott Anderson, chief U.S. economist at BMO Capital Markets. "With that said, the Fed will need to see more improvement on the inflation front in the months ahead, if its plan for a steady pace of additional rate cuts next year is to be fulfilled." The consumer price index rose 0.3% last month, the largest gain since April after advancing 0.2% for four straight months, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said. A 0.3% increase in the cost of shelter, mostly hotel and motel rooms, accounted for nearly 40% of the rise in the CPI. Shelter costs rose 0.4% in October. The cost of lodging away from home, including hotels and motels, jumped 3.7%. That was the most since October 2022 and followed a 0.5% rise in October. Food prices increased 0.4% after rising 0.2% in October. Grocery store food prices surged 0.5%, with the cost of eggs soaring 8.2% amid an avian flu outbreak. Beef also cost more as did nonalcoholic beverages. But prices of cereals and bakery products fell 1.1%, the most since the government started tracking the series in 1989. Gasoline prices rebounded 0.6% while the cost of piped gas surged 1.0%. In the 12 months through November, the CPI climbed 2.7% after increasing 2.6% in October. The rise in the CPI was in line with economists' expectations. The annual increase in inflation has slowed considerably from a peak of 9.1% in June 2022. The Fed's focus has shifted more toward the labor market. Though job growth accelerated in November after being severely restricted by strikes and hurricanes in October, the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.2% after holding at 4.1% for two consecutive months. (Reuters)
- **ECB to cut rates again and signal further easing as growth falters -** The European Central Bank is all but certain to cut interest rates again on Thursday and signal further easing in 2025 as inflation in the euro zone is nearly back at its target and the economy is faltering. The ECB has already cut rates at three of its last four meetings. Debate has nevertheless shifted to whether it is easing policy fast enough to support an economy that is at risk of recession and facing political instability at home and the prospect of a fresh trade war with the United States. That question is likely to dominate Thursday's meeting but policy hawks, who still command a comfortable majority on the 26-member Governing Council, are likely to back just a small cut of 25 basis points, taking the benchmark rate to 3%. In a possible compromise with more dovish policymakers, the cut could come with tweaks to the ECB's guidance to make clear that further policy easing is coming provided there are no new shocks to inflation, which could hit the central bank's 2% target in the first half of 2025. "Fundamentals fully justify the December cut and a more dovish forward guidance, given the deterioration in the growth picture. Underlying

inflationary pressures have eased and risks of further headwinds to growth have increased after the U.S. election results," Annalisa Piazza at MFS Investment Management said. (Reuters)

- **UK housing market gathers pace despite cloudy outlook -** Britain's housing market strengthened further in November although uncertainty over the economic outlook could curtail activity in the months ahead, according to a survey on Thursday from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. RICS' monthly house price gauge jumped to +25 in November from +16 in October, its highest level since September 2022. A Reuters poll of economists had pointed to a reading of +19. Mortgage lenders Nationwide and Halifax also reported a sharp pickup in house prices during November and Bank of England data showed lenders in October approved the most mortgages for house purchases since August 2022. However, RICS said sales might slow next year as consumer and business confidence appeared to be weakening and markets had scaled back their expectations of BoE rate cuts, pushing up mortgage costs. "Although the latest survey results continue to signal a steady improvement in buyer demand across the residential market, the broader macro environment is likely to pose additional headwinds moving forward," RICS senior economist Tarrant Parsons said. "The recent rise in mortgage interest rates may curtail the recovery in market activity before long, and this is reflected in the slightly less optimistic sales expectations data coming through this month," he added. Online property portal Rightmove said on Thursday it was more positive about the outlook for 2025. It expected asking prices to rise by 4% in 2025, its highest prediction since 2021. "We expect a busier year in 2025, with around 1.15mn transactions completed," said Rightmove property expert Tim Bannister. Increases to stamp duty land tax in April were likely to boost activity in the first half of the year, while further reductions in Bank of England interest rates are also likely to support the market, he said. The BoE cut interest rates in November for only the second time since 2020 and said future reductions are likely to be gradual as it predicts the new government's first budget will lead to slightly faster inflation and economic growth next year. (Reuters)

Regional

- **Saudi Arabia's liquidity levels grow by 9.2% in October 2024 -** Saudi Arabia's liquidity levels (available cash) achieved a growth of more than SR247,647bn on an annual basis, or by 9.2%, to reach SR2,936,089mn by the end of October of 2024, compared to the same period 2023, when it amounted to SR2,688,442mn. These levels reflect the money supply in its broad and comprehensive sense (M3). This was shown in the data of the monthly statistical bulletin of the Saudi Central Bank for October 2024. Comparing liquidity levels on a quarterly basis, they recorded a growth of 1.5%, which is an increase of nearly SR45bn, to reach SR2,943,661mn by the end of Q3 of 2024, compared to SR2,898,706mn by the end of Q2 of the same year. The liquidity levels achieved a growth of 8%, with an increase exceeding SR215bn, compared to its levels in January 2024, which was SR2,720,957mn. By reviewing the four components of the money supply (M3) in its broad and comprehensive concept, "demand deposits" recorded the largest contribution to the total at 49%, with a value of SR1,425,489mn by the end of October 2024, while "time and savings deposits" recorded SR971,103bn — the second largest contributor to the total money supply (M3) at 33%. "Other quasi-monetary deposits" reached SR312,506bn, contributing 11% to the total money supply (M3), making it the third largest contributor. Fourth came "cash in circulation outside banks" with a value of SR226.991bn, with a contribution rate of about 8%. Quasi-cash deposits include residents' deposits in foreign currencies, deposits against documentary credits, outstanding transfers, and repurchase (repo) operations conducted by banks with the private sector. It's important to note that domestic liquidity encompasses cash circulating outside banks, in addition to demand deposits, time and savings deposits, and a broader definition that includes other quasi-cash deposits. (Zawya)

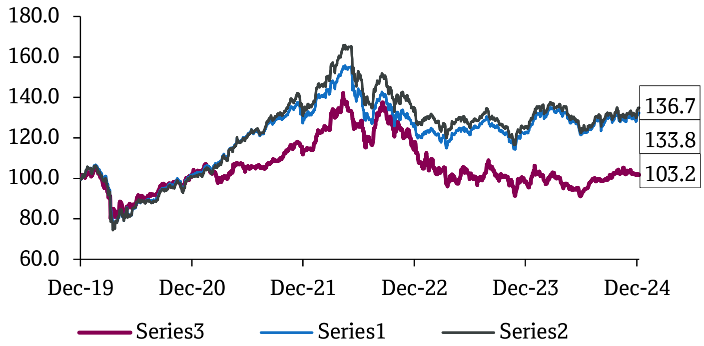
- **UAE, Eurasian Economic Union conclude negotiations on economic partnership deal -** The United Arab Emirates and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) have successfully concluded negotiations aimed at reaching a comprehensive economic partnership agreement to enhance bilateral trade in goods between the UAE and the five members of the EAEU bloc, which comprise Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, and Andrey Slepnev, Member of the Board (Minister) in charge of Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission, have confirmed the conclusion of negotiations toward an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the UAE and the EAEU. Al Zeyoudi stressed that the conclusion of EPA negotiations reflects the UAE's firm belief in constructive international cooperation and promotion of open, rules-based trade as a cornerstone of global economic growth and stability. He said, "The UAE and the Eurasian Economic Union have developed a prosperous, productive relationship that is based on a shared commitment to long-term growth and economic diversification. The conclusion of negotiations on an Economic Partnership Agreement between us will deepen these ties and enable us to build on our many synergies." "With a combined population of some 200mn people and a GDP approaching $5tn, the EAEU offers a rich seam of opportunity for our private sector, while the UAE and its growing network of global trade partners offers EAEU exporters streamlined access to the competitive, high-growth markets in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and South America. This agreement deepens vital links between the Gulf and Eurasia region, and we look forward to seeing the tangible benefits our deeper ties unfold," Al Zeyoudi added. Andrey Slepnev confirmed that the EPA will not only deepen trade relations by improving market access for goods and removing unnecessary barriers to trade, but also provide new opportunities for economic and technological cooperation between countries. Slepnev said, "The EAEU actively forms a network of economic partnerships with friendly countries. The Economic Partnership Agreement with the United Arab Emirates is a significant milestone, given the UAE's role as a global hub in the region. The EPA will provide additional boost for mutual trade, which is already showing unprecedented growth, and create systemic basis for cooperative ties." Following several rounds of discussions, the EPA reflects deepening ties between the UAE and EAEU. In the first half of 2024, the UAE shared non-oil trade worth $13.7bn with the bloc, representing a climb of 29.6% on the same period in 2023. The deal aims to boost these figures through reducing or removing tariffs, eliminating technical barriers to trade, expanding market access, and aligning customs procedures. The EPA will also seek to harmonize digital trade and e-commerce in addition to creating new platforms SME collaboration. The agreement reinforces the centrality of foreign trade to the UAE's economic agenda. The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement program now boasts six deals in force with a further nine signed and awaiting implementation. The UAE's expanding network of trade deals resulted in record non-oil trade of AED1.4tn in the first six months of 2024, an 11.2% increase compared to the same period in 2023. (Zawya)

- **DIFC consolidates position as UAE's top destination for Chinese financial institutions, multinational companies -** Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) has strengthened its position as a strategic gateway to the region, for Chinese financial institutions and multinational firms. Chinese firms are using DIFC to access markets across the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) region, as well as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) member countries which have strong connectivity through Dubai. During 2024, the Centre has witnessed a surge in interest from banks, wealth and asset management firms, large corporations and organizations in the (re)insurance sector, primarily attributed to 40 years of diplomatic relations between the UAE and China. The biggest names in the Chinese banking and financial services industry have set up operations out of DIFC, with 30% of these entities from the country being Global Fortune 500 companies. Last month, Bank of Communications opened its regional headquarters in DIFC, joining other financial institutions including Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China, China International Capital Corporation Securities Limited, CMB International Securities Limited, Construction Bank of China, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and SINOSURE. Large corporates and multinationals such as CNPC, Li Auto, NIO, Sinopec, State Grid Corporation of China, Terminus and ZTE have also established their presence in DIFC's thriving ecosystem. DIFC is home to the UAE's only cluster of Chinese financial companies including the largest five banks, which collectively contribute over 30% of the Centre's total Banking and Capital Markets Assets. Chinese banks are actively issuing bonds on Nasdaq Dubai, including green bonds, with proceeds being used for renewable energy, seawater desalination, clean energy and transportation projects in the UAE and the wider region. Over the years, Chinese issuers have listed over $22bn in debt on Nasdaq Dubai. Most recently, in November, bonds worth $2bn were listed on Nasdaq Dubai by China's Ministry of Finance. The Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA), the independent regulator for business conducted in or from DIFC, has also recorded an increase in applications and interest from the Chinese market. Most recently, the DFSA, in association with the Alternative Investment Management Association (AIMA), co-hosted a familiarization visit for wealth and asset management firms from China who are looking to establish a presence in DIFC. Arif Amiri, Chief Executive Officer at, DIFC Authority, said, "DIFC has become the financial center of choice for Chinese entities within the finance sector as well as multinational companies. Economic ties between the UAE and China continue to deepen as the two countries mark their fortieth year of diplomatic relations. (Zawya)

- **Oman: Asyad launches accelerator program for tech startups -** Asyad Group, Oman's leading integrated logistics provider, in partnership with Omantel Innovation Labs has launched the ASYAD Accelerator program to elevate competitiveness in Oman's logistics sector. Targeting local tech startups, the program aims to drive innovation, enhance operational efficiency, and support the development of Oman's logistics ecosystem. The ASYAD Accelerator program has attracted numerous tech startup projects and entrepreneurial ideas with strong potential to advance the supply chain and create innovative solutions within cold chain industry, according to a press statement. After a rigorous selection process, 29 startups were chosen to participate, bringing together a pool of promising talent prepared to make meaningful contributions and impact to the industry. Over the past two months, ASYAD Accelerator has conducted an intensive bootcamp for participating startups. Covering both theoretical and practical components, these sessions explored essential topics such as business model development, customer profiling, market assessment, financial planning, and project management. The workshops also focused on product development methods and presentation techniques to investors, empowering participants to refine their visions for their startups and prepare for market entry. Following an evaluation of top ideas and projects in the workshops, 20 tech startups progressed to a final review phase conducted by a panel of experts from Asyad Group, Omantel, and specialists from the public and private sectors. The assessment criteria included market needs, financial sustainability, and technical feasibility, ensuring alignment with Oman's logistics priorities. Four startups advanced to join the ASYAD Accelerator, selected for their market expansion potential, scalability and innovative solutions. Milestone for Omani startups: Khalfan bin Khamis al Khusaibi, In-Country Value lead at Asyad Group, praised the participating tech startups for their commitment and capabilities. He also added that selection for the ASYAD Accelerator is a transformative step in these tech startups' entrepreneurial journeys, enabling them to bring significant contributions to the logistics sector. Khusaibi emphasized the importance of continued support to accelerate these startups' solutions, adding substantial value to the national economy and Asyad Group alike. The selected tech startups include eHissab, ILab Marine, Morpho Pharmaceutical, and Sayyar, each offering unique and sustainable digital solutions aimed at addressing logistics challenges. The ASYAD Accelerator's progress reflects Asyad Group and Omantel's dedication to empowering Omani entrepreneurs and advancing technological innovation in alignment with Oman's Vision 2040. By investing in local talent and promoting eco-friendly digital solutions, the program contributes to the growth of Oman's logistics sector and reinforces the nation's position as an innovation hub. Asyad and Omantel remain committed to supporting startups within and beyond the program through joint initiatives and fostering collaborative networks. The culmination of this accelerator will see these entrepreneurs ready to launch their solutions, poised to redefine logistics operations within Oman and potentially on a global scale. (Zawya)
- **Oman market capitalization to double by 2030 -** Oman's equity market capitalization has seen significant growth since 2020 and is projected to potentially double in size by 2030, showcasing robust development in the capital markets. Daily trading volumes are also expected to increase substantially over the same period, highlighting the enhanced market activity and liquidity, says Oman Investment Bank (OIB), which has released its latest research, the Oman Capital Markets Outlook Report 2024. The report further underscores the progress toward achieving Emerging Market status by MSCI and FTSE in the near future, a milestone that could attract considerable equity inflows. In addition, Oman's fixed income market is set to grow steadily, driven by private sector activity, with its total size forecasted to expand significantly by the end of the decade. In-depth analysis: It offers an in-depth analysis of the nation's evolving capital markets. This comprehensive report delves into Oman's journey towards achieving Emerging Market status, its robust equity and fixed income growth potential, and the broader implications of the country's recent upgrade to Investment Grade status by leading credit rating agencies. The report highlights how Oman's capital markets have transformed in recent years, driven by the government's commitment to diversification under Vision 2040 and progressive reforms. These include the successful listing of major IPOs, improvements in market infrastructure, and enhanced regulatory frameworks. However, it also underscores the challenges that lie ahead, such as increasing market depth, liquidity, and foreign investment participation. "Oman is at a pivotal moment in its financial evolution," said Akin Tuzun, Head of Research, Oman Investment Bank. "This report captures the opportunities and challenges in our capital markets, providing investors and policymakers with actionable insights to navigate the future of finance in Oman." (Zawya)
- **Major Pharmacy Law amendment approved in Bahrain -** Pharmacies in Bahrain could be allowed to open unlimited number of branches across the country. MPs yesterday approved a government-drafted legislation amending the 1997 Pharmacy Law, cancelling the cap on the number of branches, which was earlier set at five. Parliament's services committee had recommended rejecting the move, saying it would put pharmacies out of business. However, MPs backed the government, forwarding the amendment to the Shura Council for review and approval. Meanwhile, Parliament Speaker Ahmed Al Musallam questioned the high market prices of medicines in Bahrain in comparison with the GCC and other parts of the world. Health Minister Dr Jalila Al Sayyed pointed out that a series of legislations and ministerial decisions were on the way to reduce the prices of medicines and end monopoly. "The prices we receive from importers in Bahrain are based on the quantities they buy and the market nature, and sale prices are set accordingly," she said. "Having multiple importers in future will certainly reduce prices. There are many legislations and decisions to make quality medicines available to members of the public at a cheaper rate." Dr Al Sayyed said allowing pharmacies to open unlimited branches would serve the needs of citizens and residents. "The pharmaceutical sector is dynamic and is set to grow further with the cancellation of limitations," she explained. "A total of 131 pharmacies opened between 2022-2024 and 73 closed, with opening and closures being unrelated. "Now, there are 456 licensed pharmacies, 260 licensed branches and 677 Bahraini pharmacists working in the private sector." The debate witnessed a tense argument between acting services committee chairman MP Mohammed Al Olaiwi and MP Hisham Al Awadhi, who accused the former of regularly disappearing from the session. "I went out to take my medication, everyone knows that I am suffering from high blood pressure and I only rushed out for two minutes," explained Mr Al Olaiwi. He collapsed during the session two weeks ago and was taken to a hospital. Mr Al Awadhi said he didn't mean to offend anyone and was only seeking answers to some queries. Committee chairwoman MP Jalila Al Sayed is hospitalized following an operation. Meanwhile, MPs unanimously approved another government-drafted legislation on signing a mutual investment opportunities agreement with Hong Kong and referred it to the Shura Council. Amendments to the 2002 National Audit Office (NAO) Law to bring sports and labor federations and associations under the office's scrutiny were withdrawn for two weeks to allow further review by the relevant committee. This comes as Mr Al Musallam officially referred the NAO's 2023-2024 audit report to the financial and economic affairs committee for review. (Zawya)
- **IMF: Kuwait GDP to contract in 2024, rebound expected in 2025 -** The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has concluded the Article IV consultation with Kuwait. A press release issued by IMF outlined the main points highlighted during the consultation: The

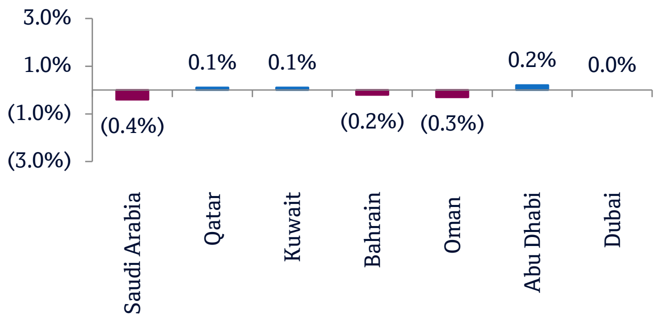
economy is in recession due to OPEC+ production cuts, but the nonoil sector is recovering, and inflation is moderating. Real GDP contracted by 3.6% in 2023, driven by a 4.3% decline in the oil sector and a one% contraction in the non-oil sector. In the second quarter of 2024, real GDP contracted by 1.5% year-on-year, with a 6.8% decline in the oil sector, partially offset by a 4.2% rebound in the nonoil sector. Headline CPI inflation decreased to 3.6% in 2023 and further moderated to 2.6% in September 2024. Lower oil prices and production have weakened Kuwait's external and fiscal balances, but financial stability remains intact. The external position remains strong, with the current account surplus moderating to 31.4% of GDP in 2023. Official reserves stood at $47.6bn at the end of 2023, covering 9.2 months of projected imports. The fiscal balance of the central government shifted to a deficit of 3.1% of GDP in the 2023/2024 fiscal year. However, the general government fiscal balance, including SWF investment income and SOE profit transfers, remained strong at 26.1% of GDP. Credit growth slowed in 2023 due to higher interest rates, but banks maintained strong capital and liquidity buffers, with non-performing loans (NPLs) remaining low and well provisioned. Kuwait's economy is projected to remain in recession in 2024, contracting by 2.8% due to continued OPEC+ production cuts, before recovering in the medium term. Real GDP is expected to grow by 2.6% in 2025 as the cuts are unwound. The non-oil sector's recovery will continue, with non-oil GDP expanding by 2.0% despite fiscal consolidation, and real credit growth picking up. Headline CPI inflation is expected to moderate to 3.0% in 2024, as excess demand pressures ease and food prices decline. The current account surplus will decrease to 27.2% of GDP due to lower oil prices and production. The central government's fiscal deficit is projected to rise to 6.6% of GDP in the 2024/2025 fiscal year, as reduced oil revenue outweighs expenditure cuts. The risks to Kuwait's economic outlook are tilted to the downside. The economy is highly vulnerable to global risks due to its oil dependence, including commodity price volatility, fluctuations in global growth, and escalating regional conflicts. Domestic risks stem from the pace of fiscal and structural reforms, which could either be delayed or expedited. These reforms are crucial for diversifying the economy away from oil, which would enhance resilience, and promote private investment. Executive Board Assessment Executive Directors agreed with the staff appraisal, acknowledging the ongoing recession but highlighting the recovery in the non-oil sector, moderating inflation, and strong financial buffers that offer protection against shocks. However, they noted that risks to the outlook are tilted to the downside and emphasized the need for continued diversification efforts due to the economy's heavy reliance on oil. Directors supported the authorities' focus on transitioning to a more dynamic and diversified economy and stressed the importance of a comprehensive, well-sequenced package of fiscal and structural reforms. They emphasized the need for medium-term fiscal consolidation to improve sustainability and ensure intergenerational equity. They recommended a balanced approach focusing on current expenditure rationalization, non-oil revenue mobilization, and increased infrastructure investment. The directors called for extending the CIT to all large domestic companies and adopting GCC-wide VAT and excise taxes. They also stressed the importance of controlling the wage bill, phasing out energy and water subsidies, and protecting vulnerable groups. The directors encouraged implementing a Medium-Term Fiscal Framework to strengthen budget planning and execution and urged quick enactment of the Financing and Liquidity Law to support fiscal financing. They agreed that the exchange rate peg remains a strong nominal anchor, and the current restrictive monetary policy stance is appropriate. They recommended enhancing monetary transmission by developing the inter-bank and domestic sovereign debt markets. The directors acknowledged the stability of the financial sector but advised replacing the unlimited deposit guarantee with a limited insurance framework to reduce moral hazard. They also suggested phasing out bank lending rate caps to support efficient risk pricing. (Zawya)

Rebased Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Daily Index Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Asset/Currency Performance	Close ($)	1D%	WTD%	YTD%
Gold/Ounce	2,714.22	0.7	3.1	2.7
Silver/Ounce	32.12	0.7	3.7	4.9
Crude Oil (Brent)/Barrel (FM Future)	73.27	1.5	3.0	0.5
Crude Oil (WTI)/Barrel (FM Future)	69.92	1.9	4.0	2.8
Natural Gas (Henry Hub)/MMBtu	3.06	0.0	7.7	(9.2)
LPG Propane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	77.00	0.0	0.3	(6.6)
LPG Butane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	108.50	0.0	1.6	(4.4)
Euro	1.05	(0.2)	(0.6)	(0.7)
Yen	152.32	0.2	1.5	1.7
GBP	1.28	(0.1)	0.1	0.2
CHF	1.13	(0.0)	(0.5)	(0.2)
AUD	0.64	(0.0)	(0.2)	(2.1)
USD Index	106.69	0.3	0.6	0.9
RUB	110.69	0.0	0.0	58.9
BRL	0.17	0.7	1.3	(0.7)

Source: Bloomberg

Global Indices Performance	Close	1D%*	WTD%*	YTD%*
MSCI World Index	3,816.76	-	(1.0)	20.4
DJ Industrial	44,310.72	0.1	(0.7)	17.6
S&P 500	6,083.19	0.8	(0.1)	27.5
NASDAQ 100	19,986.63	1.5	0.6	33.1
STOXX 600	520.13	0.3	(0.5)	3.1
DAX	20,409.88	0.4	(0.3)	15.7
FTSE 100	8,304.23	0.4	0.2	7.4
CAC 40	7,427.57	0.4	(0.4)	(6.5)
Nikkei	39,372.23	(0.1)	(0.8)	8.8
MSCI EM	1,111.71	-	0.6	8.6
SHANGHAI SE Composite	3,432.49	0.1	1.0	12.8
HANG SENG	20,155.05	(0.8)	1.5	18.8
BSE SENSEX	81,526.14	0.1	(0.3)	10.8
Bovespa	127,822.76	0.6	2.7	(23.0)
RTS	1,151.93	(0.0)	0.0	6.3

Source: Bloomberg ($ adjusted returns if any)*

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