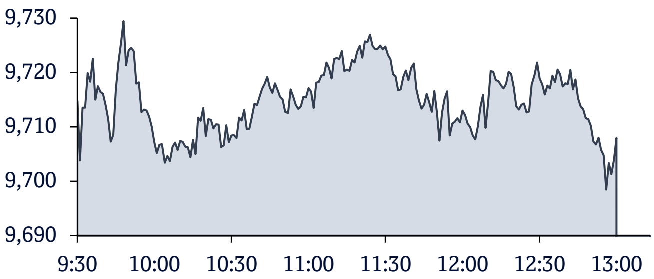
QSE Intra-Day Movement



Market Indicators	22 May 24	21 May 24	%Chg.
Value Traded (QR mn)	523.3	528.5	(1.0)
Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn)	560,472.3	561,865.9	(0.2)
Volume (mn)	189.0	162.5	16.3
Number of Transactions	19,166	17,732	8.1
Companies Traded	50	50	0.0
Market Breadth	19:26	25:21	–

Market Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	YTD%	TTM P/E
Total Return	21,835.15	(0.1)	0.1	(6.1)	10.9
All Share Index	3,392.04	(0.2)	(0.2)	(6.5)	11.7
Banks	3,998.29	(0.5)	(0.3)	(12.7)	9.6
Industrials	4,022.98	0.0	0.6	(2.3)	2.7
Transportation	5,183.29	(0.2)	0.8	21.0	24.9
Real Estate	1,706.12	(0.6)	(0.6)	13.6	14.0
Insurance	2,251.79	(3.1)	(1.6)	(14.5)	167.0
Telecoms	1,520.25	0.1	(2.7)	(10.9)	8.4
Consumer Goods and Services	7,412.98	1.8	(0.4)	(2.1)	231.1
Al Rayan Islamic Index	4,644.79	(0.0)	0.3	(2.5)	14.1

Qatar Commentary

The QE Index declined 0.1% to close at 9,708.0. Losses were led by the Insurance and Real Estate indices, falling 3.1% and 0.6%, respectively. Top losers were Qatar Insurance Company and Dlala Brokerage & Inv. Holding Co., falling 5.1% and 2.0%, respectively. Among the top gainers, Widam Food Company gained 6.6%, while Qatar Fuel Company was up 2.9%.

GCC Commentary

Saudi Arabia: The TASI Index gained 0.3% to close at 12,157.0. Gains were led by the Utilities and Real Estate Mgmt & Dev't indices, rising 1.8% and 1.1%, respectively. Naseej International Trading Co. rose 9.8%, while Gulf General Cooperative Insurance Co. was up 6.7%.

Dubai: The DFM Index fell 0.4% to close at 4,057.9. The Real Estate index declined 0.8%, while the Industrials index fell 0.7%. Al Salam Sudan declined 3.1%, while Dubai Taxi Company was down 2.6%.

Abu Dhabi: The ADX General Index fell 0.4% to close at 8,973.0. The Real Estate index declined 3.1%, while the Health Care index fell 2.0%. Ras Al Khaimah National Insurance declined 10.0%, while Abu Dhabi National Takaful was down 9.9%.

Kuwait: The Kuwait All Share Index gained 0.1% to close at 7,142.7. The Real Estate index rose 0.5%, while the Technology index gained 0.4%. Equipment Holding Co. rose 50.4%, while Alimtiaz Investment Group was up 8.7%.

Oman: The MSM 30 Index gained 0.6% to close at 4,807.2. Gains were led by the Financial and Industrial indices, rising 1.3% and 0.5%, respectively. Oman Cement Company rose 4.1%, while SMN Power Holding was up 4.0%.

Bahrain: The BHB Index gained 0.1% to close at 2,015.7. The Consumer Discretionary index rose 1.2% while The Financials index gained marginally. Bahrain Duty Free Shop Complex rose 3.7%, while GFH Financial Group was up 0.7%.

GCC Top Gainers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Makkah Const. & Dev. Co.	Saudi Arabia	97.00	6.0	263.0	30.6
Bank Nizwa	Oman	0.110	3.8	3,853.0	12.5
Qatar Fuel Company	Qatar	14.84	2.9	1,663.0	(10.5)
Acwa Power Co.	Saudi Arabia	480.20	2.4	455.5	87.2
Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank	Abu Dhabi	8.200	2.4	8,006.8	(10.7)

GCC Top Losers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
ADNOC Drilling	Abu Dhabi	4.130	(4.0)	6,662.9	9.3
Aldar Properties	Abu Dhabi	5.860	(3.6)	10,509.2	9.5
Saudi Electricity Co.	Saudi Arabia	17.72	(3.2)	1,703.6	(6.6)
Multiply Group	Abu Dhabi	2.180	(2.7)	25,702.7	(31.4)
Etihad Etisalat Co.	Saudi Arabia	51.50	(2.6)	1,818.0	5.0

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%
Widam Food Company	2.716	6.6	10,321.2	15.1
Qatar Fuel Company	14.84	2.9	1,663.0	(10.5)
Gulf International Services	3.208	2.8	14,942.8	16.3
Inma Holding	4.338	1.9	362.9	4.6
QLM Life & Medical Insurance Co.	1.989	1.9	76.3	(20.4)

QSE Top Losers	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Qatar Insurance Company	2.049	(5.1)	647.5	(20.9)
Dlala Brokerage & Inv. Holding Co.	1.250	(2.0)	2,301.8	(5.3)
Qatar Industrial Manufacturing Co	2.563	(1.4)	43.8	(14.6)
United Development Company	1.274	(1.4)	5,406.0	19.6
Aamal Company	0.774	(1.0)	969.2	(8.4)

QSE Top Volume Trades	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co.	1.440	0.1	41,612.4	2.9
Gulf International Services	3.208	2.8	14,942.8	16.3
Baladna	1.327	0.9	13,896.8	8.4
Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding	1.800	0.0	11,795.8	0.7
Masraf Al Rayan	2.482	0.2	10,888.9	(6.5)

QSE Top Value Trades	Close*	1D%	Val. '000	YTD%
QNB Group	13.73	(0.9)	72,392.5	(16.9)
Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co.	1.440	0.1	60,775.3	2.9
Gulf International Services	3.208	2.8	47,627.5	16.3
Dukhan Bank	3.764	(0.3)	34,746.1	(5.3)
Widam Food Company	2.716	6.6	27,802.3	15.1

Regional Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%	Exch. Val. Traded ($ mn)	Exchange Mkt. Cap. ($ mn)	P/E**	P/B**	Dividend Yield
Qatar*	9,707.96	(0.1)	0.1	(0.2)	(10.4)	143.68	153,681.5	10.9	1.3	4.9
Dubai	4,057.87	(0.4)	(0.7)	(2.4)	(0.0)	93.53	187,519.1	8.0	1.3	5.9
Abu Dhabi	8,972.99	(0.4)	(0.7)	(1.0)	(6.3)	297.67	686,254.3	18.0	2.6	2.2
Saudi Arabia	12,157.03	0.3	(0.3)	(1.9)	1.6	1,413.21	2,850,327.5	20.4	2.4	3.4
Kuwait	7,142.74	0.1	(0.3)	1.3	4.8	169.12	150,782.2	14.2	1.7	3.3
Oman	4,807.20	0.6	0.3	0.5	6.5	7.23	24,320.5	12.8	1.0	5.5
Bahrain	2,015.68	0.1	0.3	(0.7)	2.2	5.62	21,140.3	7.7	0.8	8.3

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

Qatar Market Commentary

- The QE Index declined 0.1% to close at 9,708.0. The Insurance and Real Estate indices led the losses. The index fell on the back of selling pressure from GCC and Arab shareholders despite buying support from Qatari and Foreign shareholders.
- Qatar Insurance Company and Dlala Brokerage & Inv. Holding Co. were the top losers, falling 5.1% and 2.0%, respectively. Among the top gainers, Widam Food Company gained 6.6%, while Qatar Fuel Company was up 2.9%.
- Volume of shares traded on Wednesday rose by 16.3% to 189.0mn from 162.6mn on Tuesday. Further, as compared to the 30-day moving average of 170.0mn, volume for the day was 11.2% higher. Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co. and Gulf International Services were the most active stocks, contributing 22.0% and 7.9% to the total volume, respectively.

Overall Activity	Buy%*	Sell%*	Net (QR)
Qatari Individuals	33.44%	31.15%	11,947,162.81
Qatari Institutions	29.64%	30.39%	(3,942,161.94)
Qatari	**63.08%**	**61.55%**	**8,005,000.87**
GCC Individuals	0.44%	0.35%	444,462.34
GCC Institutions	1.32%	2.21%	(4,673,245.03)
GCC	**1.76%**	**2.56%**	**(4,228,782.69)**
Arab Individuals	9.07%	9.93%	(4,518,508.35)
Arab Institutions	0.00%	0.00%	-
Arab	**9.07%**	**9.93%**	**(4,518,508.35)**
Foreigners Individuals	3.52%	2.96%	2,927,259.70
Foreigners Institutions	22.58%	22.99%	(2,184,969.53)
Foreigners	**26.10%**	**25.96%**	**742,290.17**

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

Global Economic Data

Global Economic Data

Date	Market	Source	Indicator	Period	Actual	Consensus	Previous
05-21	EU	Eurostat	Construction Output MoM	Mar	0.10%	NA	0.40%
05-21	EU	Eurostat	Construction Output YoY	Mar	0.10%	NA	-1.80%
05-21	Germany	German Federal Statistical Office	PPI MoM	Apr	0.20%	0.30%	0.20%
05-21	Germany	German Federal Statistical Office	PPI YoY	Apr	-3.30%	-3.10%	-2.90%

Qatar

- **Strong demand for Qatar's $2.5bn green bonds, attracts over $14bn in bids -** The Ministry of Finance announced the issuance of green bonds totaling $2.5bn, marking the first issuance of its kind in the region, aimed at funding environmentally friendly projects. The ministry said that the bonds are divided into two tranches: a $1bn tranche with a five-year maturity priced at a 30 basis point spread over US Treasuries and a $1.5bn tranche with a 10-year maturity priced at a 40 basis point spread over US Treasuries. Qatar achieved the lowest spread ever recorded by any bond-issuing country in the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe, and Africa. The Ministry of Finance revealed that the coverage ratio exceeded 5.6 times the total issuance size, with peak subscription demand reaching over $14bn. This confirms that the issuance enjoyed broad and diversified geographic and institutional investor interest from around the world. The remarkable success of the subscription process reflects investors' high confidence in the sovereign green financing framework established by the Ministry of Finance according to the highest global standards in sustainable finance. It also provides investors with an opportunity to participate in the country's journey to combat the negative effects of climate change and protect the environment through sustainable development, alongside the development of the sustainable finance sector in the country. Credit Agricole and HSBC were selected as coordinators for structuring the sovereign green financing framework and will serve as global coordinators alongside JP Morgan and QNB Capital as primary issuance managers. They will also be joint bookrunners with Barclays, Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, SMBC Nikko, and Standard Chartered bank. (Qatar Tribune)
- **Meeza QSTP LLC (Public) announces appointment of new Chief Executive Officer -** Meeza QSTP LLC (Public) announced the appointment of Mr. Mohamed Ali Al-Ghaithani as Chief Executive Officer with effect from 23/05/2024. Mr Al-Ghaithani comes with a diverse wealth of experience in the technology sector spanning 18 years that should be instrumental in steering Meeza especially during this high-growth phase. (QSE)
- **Qatar sees 68.5% surge in contracts awarded in Q1 -** The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) project awards increased by 20.3% year-on-year (y-o-y) during first quarter (Q1) of 2024 to reach $45bn as compared to $37.4bn during Q1 2023. The consistent elevated trend in GCC contract awards underlines the entrenched resolve of GCC governments to see through their diversification projects, as well as state funding support, noted a report by Kamco Invest. The total value of contracts awarded in Qatar increased by 68.5% y-o-y to reach $6.1bn during Q1 2024 as compared to $3.6bn in Q1 2023, according to MEED Projects data. The growth in contract awards was primarily due to the jump in value of projects awarded in Qatar's oil sector during Q1-2024 which represented 80.5% of the total contracts awarded in the country during the year. The total value of oil sector projects awarded jumped from no contracts awarded in Q1 2023 to $4.9bn during Q1 2024 reflecting $6bn EPC contract to increase oil production from Al Shaheen offshore oil field by about 100 tb/d. The project is the third capacity expansion of the Al Shaheen oil field. The Al Shaheen oil field, which is estimated to have a 300 tb/d production potential has been undergoing capacity expansion works for over six years. Total value of contracts awarded in Qatar's Construction Sector increased by 347.4% to reach $519mn against $116mn in Q1 2023. Similarly, the aggregate value of contracts awarded in the Power Sector improved 49.1% to reach $489mn during the similar period. The growth in GCC contract awards was evenly distributed during Q1 2024 as three out of the six countries in the GCC recorded y-o-y growth in their project's awards, including two of the largest projects markets in the region, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, while the remaining three countries witnessed declines. In terms of sectors, Q1 2024 witnessed a jump in the value of projects awarded in the gas and oil sectors. Total GCC gas sector contracts awarded during the quarter jumped more than 19 times to reach $7.4bn as compared to $382mn during Q1-2023. On the other hand, the total value of contracts awarded in the GCC oil sector increased nearly seven times to reach $9bn during the similar period, making the sector the biggest contributor in terms of absolute growth in value of contracts awarded in the GCC region during the quarter. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **QNB Group, Ooredoo Fintech extend partnership to 'revolutionize' fintech services in Oman -** QNB Group, the largest financial institution in the Middle East and Africa, and Ooredoo Fintech, announced an extension to their partnership aimed at "revolutionizing" fintech services in Oman. This collaboration marks a "significant" milestone in the region's digital transformation journey, as both entities join forces to offer innovative solutions through Ooredoo's wallet platform. Building on their existing strategic alliance, which to date has focused on the market leading Ooredoo Money proposition in Qatar, QNB will serve as the settlement bank for Ooredoo Fintech's mobile wallet in Oman, leveraging its extensive expertise in banking and finance to facilitate seamless transactions and enhance its user experience. The partnership will

empower consumers in Oman to enjoy a wide range of financial services directly from their mobile devices, including mobile payments, fund transfers, bill payments, and more. Commenting on the partnership, Khalid Ahmed al-Sada, senior executive vice-president (Group Corporate and Institutional Banking) stated, "We are excited to collaborate with Ooredoo Fintech to bring cutting-edge fintech solutions to Oman. This partnership aligns with our commitment to supporting innovation in the countries we operate. By leveraging our robust banking infrastructure and Ooredoo's expansive reach, we aim to empower individuals and businesses with convenient, secure, and accessible financial services." Michelangelo Giacco, CEO, Ooredoo Fintech, expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration, saying, "We are dedicated to leveraging technology to enrich the lives of our customers. This partnership with QNB represents a significant step towards realizing this vision, as we combine our expertise to deliver innovative fintech solutions tailored to the needs of the Omani market. Together, we aim to redefine the future of digital wallets and drive financial inclusion across the Sultanate." The partnership between QNB and Ooredoo Fintech underscores their shared commitment to fostering financial inclusion and driving digital innovation in Oman. By harnessing the power of technology and collaboration, both organizations are poised to shape the future of fintech services in the region, empowering individuals and businesses with greater access to financial resources and opportunities. (Gulf Times)

- **US-Qatar ties deepen as American firms support next phase of Qatar's 2030 vision -** American businesses are keen on supporting the Qatari government to achieve the objectives of the Qatar National Vision 2030, according to Khush Choksy, senior vice-president of the US Chamber of Commerce for Middle East, Central Asia and Turkiye. Choksy recently led a business delegation to Qatar of nearly 20 US companies, which held meetings with various Qatari ministries to understand the country's 2030 strategy and private sector participation in job creation, economic diversification, leveraging education, sports and technology investments. "We're here with a business mission of 20 business leaders. Prior to the Qatar Economic Forum, we held meetings with a broad range of players, including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to understand Qatar's Vision 2030 national strategy, particularly its final phase, and how American companies can contribute to it and also benefit from that process," Choksy told Gulf Times on the sidelines of QEF 2024. Earlier this year, the Qatari government announced the launch of the Third National Development Strategy (NDS3) 2024-2030, which is the final stage to achieving the goals of the QNV 2030. Choksy explained, "As Qatar looks beyond the 2022 FIFA games to the next phase of its economic growth, we wanted to be here right at the outset and understand what the challenges and the opportunities are for its economic growth, as well as how the US private sector can participate in the last phase of the Qatar National Vision 2030, as stated in the launch of this new development strategy." The QNV 2030, which was launched in 2008, focuses on job creation, economic diversification, leveraging education, sports investments, and technology. In its final phase, the private sector is expected to play the lead role as previous phases of the country's 2030 vision concentrated on establishing its foundations and major infrastructure, Choksy pointed out. He said US companies can work with their Qatari counterparts in areas like technology, biotech, artificial intelligence (AI). They can also contribute and benefit from potential partnerships facilitated by Qatar's investments in the US, which stands at $45bn. Choksy said, "The initial announcement of the $30bn investments into the United States was made by Qatar at the US Chamber in Washington, DC around 2015. It was also there that an additional announcement was made that took Qatari investments from $30bn to $45bn. The Chamber welcomes Qatar's investment into the US and will continue to support these efforts. "The Qatar Investment Authority has been a strong partner of the Chamber and its US-Qatar Business Program over the last decade. In the next phase of Qatar National Vision 2030, we are really looking at forging relationships between Qatari and American companies and to see where we can play the biggest role." Choksy emphasized that the US Chamber of Commerce plans to continue its engagement with Qatar, both physically and through constant communication with the Qatari government and member companies. The chamber is also looking forward to hosting Qatar's delegation at the upcoming SelectUSA conference in Washington, DC, slated next month. (Gulf Times)

- **QRDI, USQBC sign MoU during QEF 2024 to foster innovation -** The US-Qatar Business Council (USQBC) and Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation Council (QRDI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the sidelines of the Qatar Economic Forum, signifying a major leap forward in bilateral relations. The MoU was signed by Engineer Omar al-Ansari, QRDI Council secretary-general, and Sheikha Mayes al-Thani, managing director, USQBC Doha, during Innovation Day held at the forum. This strategic partnership underscores a shared commitment to fostering a vibrant innovation ecosystem that benefits both nations. The five-year agreement will serve as a bridge, connecting US companies with Qatar's dynamic R&D landscape and propelling collaborative innovation projects. The USQBC, a leading advocate for US-Qatar economic ties, will leverage its established platforms to facilitate American business participation in Qatar's exciting R&D opportunities. This will not only bolster Qatar's innovation ecosystem but also unlock new avenues for US companies. Sheikha Mayes said, "This agreement is a game-changer, paving the way for increased US business participation in Qatar's dynamic and progressive landscape. Together, we will unlock the immense potential for growth and prosperity for both our nations." Al-Ansari said, "This MoU is a testament to our unwavering commitment to fostering innovation and collaboration. Our collaboration with USQBC through this MoU enriches our commitment to fostering international strategic collaborations in vital areas of innovation and research. Through this partnership, we aim to leverage USQBC's platforms and events to promote QRDI's innovation programs and attract American businesses to engage in RDI activities within Qatar. "Furthermore, we seek to drive collaborative innovation efforts by promoting Qatar's RDI ecosystem, facilitating connections, and fostering dialogue between innovators from both nations, ultimately contributing to the development of a vibrant and sustainable knowledge-based economy in Qatar." QRDI Council, a driving force behind Qatar's national advancement, will work hand-in-hand with USQBC to address critical challenges through cutting-edge research and development. By focusing on promoting QRDI Council's innovation programs, enhancing commercialization opportunities, and fostering policy dialogue, this MoU lays the groundwork for strategic collaboration in key areas. This partnership promises to be a catalyst for a future fueled by innovation and progress for both the US and Qatar. (Gulf Times)

- **Qatar Executive looks to enhance fleet; demand surges for business jets -** Qatar Executive (QE), the corporate jet subsidiary of Qatar Airways Group, is adding more business jets to its fleet in view of demand from all over the world, noted Group CEO Badr Mohamed al-Meer. "At Qatar Executive, we already have a fleet of 15 G650s. Qatar Executive expects an additional eight G700 to be delivered in the near future, with two aircraft already received and two more set to arrive within weeks," al-Meer said. He said the demand for private jets has been increasing since the Covid-19 pandemic. "People are preparing to fly more on private jets… and once they experienced what private aviation is all about, I think they got addicted to flying on our fleet. "The demand (for private jets) is from all over the world. We are the biggest operator of Gulfstream and we get requests from international customers. And this is why a big portion of our aircraft are based in Europe, US or in Asia. Basically, we are catering to demand from all over the world," al-Meer revealed. He said the new G700 fleet will enter full commercial service in June, and QE is already taking advance expressions of interest from clients to charter the new aircraft. The G700 represents the future of private air travel, offering a superior flying experience with unrivalled design, technology, comfort and style. The aircraft offers an exceptionally spacious passenger cabin consisting of four individual living areas including a dedicated private rear stateroom with a permanent fixed bed. The bespoke cabins have been designed and meticulously crafted to meet the standards of Qatar Executive's most discerning customers. The passenger experience has been augmented to include a revolutionary lighting system, the industry's lowest cabin pressure altitude and natural lighting through 20 windows. The G700 also prioritizes passengers' comfort with a whisper-quiet cabin, along with 100% fresh air replenished every two to three minutes, and an ionizing system for the cabin air, providing the highest air quality possible to date in a business jet. This innovation ensures passengers arrive more refreshed than with any other aircraft type. Asked about potential future orders for business jets, al-Meer noted: "We see a big demand for private business jets from all over the world. Our entire fleet is busy…our aircraft are flying. I am confident within two weeks, our new G700 will start flying. We already have long list of requests from customers to be the first to fly it." The Qatar Airways Group CEO said: "Among major airlines, we have the highest load factor. It varies between 85 and 88%. Some of our aircraft have a load factor of up to 98%. "To meet additional demand, we need more aircraft – so more deliveries are required. The demand in the industry has picked up. It is very high. Unfortunately, for our passengers…our customers, we are not able to meet their demand because of the shortage of aircraft in the market." (Gulf Times)

- **QFZ, Qatar Post sign MoU to provide postal services to support investors at free zones -** Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZ) and Qatar Postal Services Company (Qatar Post) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on providing comprehensive postal services to companies and investors operating within the free zones in Qatar. This partnership aligns with QFZ's strategic objective to enhance its service offerings and support businesses by ensuring efficient and reliable postal solutions. The MoU was signed by Abdulla Hamad al-Binali, director of Investor Relations and Technical Support at QFZ, and Hamad al-Fahida, chief operating officer of Qatar Post, during a ceremony at the Business Innovation Park in Ras Bufontas Free Zone. The agreement aims to establish a framework for Qatar Post to offer a range of postal services, including mail collection, PO Box services, international shipping, and connected collection (shop and ship) to the companies operating in the free zones. This collaboration is part of QFZ's continuous efforts to provide an integrated business environment for its investors, ensuring that all operational needs are met efficiently. Al-Binali said, "We are delighted to announce our partnership with Qatar Post, which marks a significant step towards enhancing the range of services available to businesses in Qatar's free zones. "This MoU reflects our commitment to providing a comprehensive support system for our investors, thereby fostering a conducive environment for business growth and operational excellence. Our collaboration with Qatar Post will play a pivotal role in ensuring that our investors have access to top-tier postal services, facilitating their day-to-day operations, and contributing to the overall economic development of Qatar." Al-Fahida said, "We are proud to partner with Qatar Free Zones Authority in this initiative. This MoU underscores our dedication to supporting the business and investment community in Qatar by delivering high-quality postal and logistics services. Our co-operation with QFZ will enable us to provide tailored postal solutions that meet the specific needs of businesses operating in the free zones, enhancing their operational efficiency and global connectivity." QFZ offers an integrated platform for businesses, supported by several benefits, including an attractive infrastructure for companies to establish and operate their businesses, a skilled workforce, 100% foreign ownership, tax exemptions, among others. The addition of Qatar Post's services will further bolster Qatar's free zones appeal as a premier destination for attracting FDI and more global companies, and therefore, contributing to the State's economic development goals. (Gulf Times)

- **Labor ministers from 33 countries agree to sustain Doha Dialogue on labor mobility -** Ministers of Labor of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jordan, Lebanon and 25 African countries adopted the Doha Declaration, which includes mechanisms and procedures to sustain the dialogue between the GCC, Jordan, Lebanon and African Union countries. This aims to enhance joint coordination and address current and future challenges facing countries of origin and destination, with regard to African labor mobility to the GCC, Jordan and Lebanon. The Ministers of Labor participating in the ministerial meeting agreed to launch the Doha Dialogue as a voluntary and non-binding consultative platform, chaired by the Permanent Secretariat of the State of Qatar and the African Union, to enhance regional and international cooperation on workforce employment between Africa, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Jordan and Lebanon, to be held every two years at technical and ministerial level, with the chairmanship rotating between the African Union, GCC countries, Jordan and Lebanon. The Doha Declaration emphasized the necessity of improving the management of labor mobility, promoting fair employment, addressing illegal practices to ensure decent work, as well as enhancing regional cooperation among countries participating in the dialogue to consult and exchange ideas and experiences that promote sustainable development and benefit both sending and receiving countries. The ministerial meeting, held on May 21 and 22, brought together Ministers of Labor, experts and high-level stakeholders to advance discussions and cooperation on labor mobility issues from Africa to GCC countries, Jordan and Lebanon. Thirty-three countries participated in the dialogue, including the GCC countries (the UAE, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait), in addition to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Lebanon on one hand, and 25 African countries, including the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the State of Libya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Sierra Leone, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Chad, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of Congo, the Republic of Djibouti, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Eritrea, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Kenya, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Nigeria, The Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of Somalia, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of Senegal, the Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Tunisia, the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Zambia, and the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, on the other hand. The Ministers of Labor affirmed in the Doha Declaration the need to improve the management of labor mobility, the contractual labor cycle and the promotion of fair employment, based on the principles of mutual respect, partnership and shared responsibility, as well as labor and human rights policy frameworks. They highlighted the recent increase of African expatriate workers in the GCC region, Jordan and Lebanon, representing 12% of the total expatriate workers in the region, leading to increasing coordination and enhanced cooperation between the two regions. Ministers of Labor participating in the ministerial meeting stated that the Doha Dialogue represents a unique opportunity to address the challenges related to the African labor mobility to the Gulf States, Jordan and Lebanon, enhance its governance, and increase its contribution to sustainable development and inclusive growth, while enhancing regional and international cooperation in this regard. They emphasized that labor mobility from Africa to the GCC, Jordan and Lebanon plays a key role in achieving sustainable growth and benefits both sending and receiving countries. The ministers also highlighted the active role played by the GCC countries in the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, launched by the United Arab Emirates to create a common and sustainable platform for dialogue and exchange of experiences with Asian countries to address challenges and develop mechanisms for the mutual recognition of skills, the recruitment and employment process, the role of technology and other common issues. By hosting this dialogue in cooperation with the African Union, the State of Qatar affirms the importance of dialogue with the African side, given the growing mobility of African labor and the urgent need to find practical and effective solutions that serve the interests of both regions and the rights and dignity of the expatriate workforce. The Ministers of Labor of the participating countries recommended the launch of the Doha Dialogue to provide opportunities for member states to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices on contractual employment, develop practical solutions, and promote data and research to address issues arising from the workforce mobility between Africa and the GCC countries, Jordan and Lebanon. The recommendations of the Doha Declaration affirmed the need to enhance cooperation regarding labor mobility to address illegal practices and ensure decent work as well as enhancing the contribution of the African workforce to sustainable development in both sending and receiving countries by developing knowledge on labor market trends and skills required in the future, in light of the challenges of technological progress and climate change, as well as keeping pace with developments in the labor market by providing the workforce with the required skills and competencies of the future. The recommendations emphasized the need to strengthen collaboration between the public and private sectors, including employers and recruiters, to build partnerships that promote decent work, ensuring that the specific needs of female expatriate workers are taken into account, and enhancing their contribution to sustainable development. Participants in the ministerial meeting expressed their thanks to the State of Qatar for its worthy chairmanship of the dialogue and its initiative to launch the Doha Dialogue. They also expressed their appreciation to the African Union Commission and the Executive Office of the Council of Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council for their effective support for this initiative. During the ministerial meeting, some of the Ministers of Labor from African countries expressed their intention to host the second edition of the Doha Dialogue in their countries, confirming the importance of this dialogue in enhancing consultation, exchanging ideas and addressing the challenges related to labor mobility from African countries to GCC countries, Jordan and Lebanon. (Qatar Tribune)

- **Qatar to host 51st UN Tourism Regional Commission conference for M-E -** A high-level delegation from Qatar Tourism led by Saad bin Ali Al Kharji, chairman of Qatar Tourism, is participating in the 50th UN Tourism meeting of the Regional Commission for the Middle East, which is currently held in the capital of the Sultanate of Oman, Muscat. The meetings started on May 22 and will continue until May 24. At the conclusion of the meetings, it was announced that the State of Qatar will host the upcoming UN Tourism Regional Commission 51st conference. Choosing Doha as the host for the next conference is a testament to Qatar's position as a regional and global hub for cultural, economic and political exchange. It solidifies the tourism sector's integral contribution in sustainable economic development and the role it played in enhancing cooperation between countries and fostering international relations. Chairman of Qatar Tourism met with Secretary-General of the United Nations Tourism Organization, Zurab Pololikashvili, where discussions took place about launching the second edition of the Qatar Tourism Awards in partnership with the United Nations World Tourism Organization to honor those who contributed to providing unique experience and service excellence to Qatar's visitors. In addition, they explored ways of collaborations on developing innovative ideas mainly within the digital and AI realms. Qatar Tourism expressed its interest in sharing its expertise and experience with launching the Hayya platform with other member states, with hopes of ultimately applying it within the region. (Qatar Tribune)

International

- **Fed shifts talk to 'scenarios' as policy grows less certain -** Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said in a May 1 press conference he didn't want to talk about economic "hypotheticals," but that's what he and other U.S. central bank officials have shifted towards in discussing monetary policy that has hit an uncertain juncture in the effort to tame inflation. Dropping what had been explicit guidance about the likelihood of interest rate cuts this year, Powell and other Fed officials are instead focusing attention on broadly different near-term paths the economy might follow, and their likely reaction to each case. Former Fed officials and staffers with experience attending meetings of the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee say that's a sign of just how uncertain policymakers feel right now and is meant to shift attention from the detailed economic and policy projections they produce each quarter and onto a wider array of potential outcomes. "Scenario analysis," as it's known, isn't meant to account for every shock, and in normal times can amount to a "quite mundane" list of economic narratives presented by Fed staff at each meeting, said Antulio Bomfim, a former Powell adviser who is now head of global macro for Northern Trust's global fixed income team. But Powell's elaboration in his post-meeting May 1 press conference about different paths the economy might follow "caught my attention," Bomfim said. "Scenario analysis becomes important to handle those situations where you're especially uncertain about what's coming next." The minutes from that meeting are scheduled to be released on Wednesday and could provide more details on the shift in approach. In a recent policy review for the Bank of England, former Fed chief Ben Bernanke recommended scenario analysis as a way, the BoE said, "to consider the key risks to the macroeconomic outlook" and help the public understand how the central bank would respond - a benefit some Fed officials appear to be seeking. "The reaction to uncertainty, to me, isn't to make more projections," San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly said earlier this month. "There's a range of scenarios under which you would do different policy actions. And I think the best way I can talk to people is go through those scenarios and really reveal the reaction function" - not try to make more precise predictions. (Reuters)

- **UK inflation pressure stays hot, dashing hopes for June rate cut -** Inflation in Britain eased less than expected and a key core measure of prices barely dropped, prompting investors to pull bets on a Bank of England rate cut next month which could have boosted embattled Prime Minister Rishi Sunak before an election. The consumer price index (CPI) rose by 2.3% in the 12 months to April, down sharply from March's 3.2% increase and its lowest since July 2021, the Office for National Statistics said. But the BoE and economists polled by Reuters had forecast a bigger drop to 2.1%, just above the central bank's 2% target, after a big cut to household energy tariffs in April. Services inflation - a gauge of domestic price pressure for the BoE and which is also a problem in other European countries - was much higher than expected, and petrol prices rose. Sterling jumped and investors slashed the chance of a BoE rate cut in June to just 18%, down sharply from 50% on Tuesday. "This is only one month's data, but it is enough of a surprise to suggest that the inflation process is not tracking as the BoE had expected," Allan Monks, chief UK economist at JP Morgan, said. "There is still another labor market and CPI report to come before the June meeting, but it is difficult for us to see what that could realistically do to leave most members feeling confident about cutting in June specifically." Services inflation inched down to 5.9% from 6.0% in March. The BoE's forecasts and the Reuters poll had pointed to a reading of 5.5%. Analysts at RBC Capital said the overshoot in services inflation did not appear to be driven by one-off factors, suggesting further stickiness in prices ahead. "Certainly this morning takes June off the table," Cathal Kennedy, senior UK economist at RBC Capital Markets, said. (Reuters)

- **Emerging market credit ratings are finally looking up again -** From Brazil, Nigeria and Turkey to even some of the riskiest emerging markets such as Egypt and Zambia, evidence is growing that a decade-long deterioration in sovereign credit ratings has finally started to reverse. Economists watch ratings because they influence a country's borrowing costs and many are now highlighting a turnaround that seems incongruous with the usual warnings about rising debt pressures. According to Bank of America, almost three-quarters of all sovereign rating moves by S&P, Moody's and Fitch this year have been in a positive direction, compared with the almost 100% that went the other way in the first year of the COVID pandemic. With that and the spike in global interest rates now in the rear view mirror, more good news should be coming too. Moody's now has 15 developing economies on a positive outlook - rating firm parlance for an upgrade watch - one of its highest numbers ever. S&P has 17, while Fitch has its best ratio of positive versus negative outlooks since a post-global financial crisis rebound in ratings in 2011. Fitch's global head of sovereign research Ed Parker said the turnaround has been down to a combination of factors. For some countries it has been a general recovery from COVID and/or the energy price spikes caused by the Ukraine war. Others are seeing country-specific improvements in policymaking, while a core group of junk-rated "frontier" nations are now benefiting from suddenly being able to access debt markets again, he said. Aviva Investors' head of EM hard currency debt, Aaron Grehan, describes the current upgrade wave as a "definitive shift" that has also coincided with a sharp drop in the premiums that emerging markets almost everywhere have had to pay to borrow. "Since 2020, well over 60% of all rating actions have been negative. In 2024, 70% have been positive," Grehan said, adding that Aviva's internal scoring models were similar. (Reuters)

Regional

- **Saudi Arabia, Japan ink over 30 pacts in energy, manufacturing and financial sectors -** Saudi Arabia and Japan signed more than 30 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) in the fields of energy, manufacturing, and financial activities. The pacts were inked on the sidelines of the Saudi Arabia -Japan Vision 2030 Business Forum in Tokyo on Tuesday. Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman and Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih were among those who addressed the forum. In his address, Al-Falih said that Saudi Arabia's non-oil income has doubled and is looking for an accumulated investment of over $3tn. He noted that this offers big opportunities for Japanese stakeholders. In her speech, Sara Al-Sayed, deputy minister of investment for international partnerships, outlined Saudi Arabia's plans for further collaboration with Japan. "Under the Saudi-Japan Vision 2030, we aim to take this partnership to a new level," she said. Saudi Minister of Information

Technology and Communication Abdullah Al-Swaha spoke at the "Digital Entertainment Roundtable" held as part of the forum. More than 300 Saudi and Japanese business and industry leaders and government officials are participating in the forum, which aims to boost bilateral trade, investment and cultural ties. During the business forum, Japanese Minister of Industry Ken Saito met with senior Saudi officials, including Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman and Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih, as well as senior executives of Saudi Aramco and other major Saudi companies. Speaking on the occasion, Ken Saito said that Saudi Arabia is the largest supplier of crude oil to Japan, and one of the most important partners with regard to energy security. (Zawya)

- **Saudi woos electric flying taxi company Archer as Gulf rivals vie to be aviation hub -** Saudi Arabia has begun courting Archer Aviation (ACHR.N), following the electric air taxi company's announcement, of a partnership with economic and regional rival, the United Arab Emirates. The competition between the countries to become the top hub in the region is leading to big spending, benefiting new companies like Archers. Last month, Archer signed a pact with the Abu Dhabi Investment Office for multi-million-dollar investments to speed up planned commercial air taxi operations in the UAE. "Since we made our first several announcements in the UAE that has piqued interest" across the region and especially in Saudi Arabia, said Nikhil Goel, chief commercial officer for Archer. Now, Goel said Archer was in talks with Saudi on potential partnerships in Riyadh, Jeddah, and some of its multi-bn dollar projects in the kingdom. Archer Aviation, backed by the likes of Chrysler-parent Stellantis (STLAM.MI), Boeing (BA.N), and United Airlines (UAL.O), is developing electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft that have been touted as the future of urban air mobility. The oil-rich region's deep pockets make it a promising frontier for the eVTOL industry which must also overcome certification hurdles to ensure its future. As part of its plan to wean itself off oil, Riyadh is pouring billions into its aviation industry to become a regional hub. It announced an order for 105 Airbus narrow-body aircraft on Tuesday, launched new airline Riyadh Air last year, and announced a massive six-runway airport in 2022. Long-time aviation center Dubai has announced its own big orders and has plans to boost Dubai International Airport's capacity to 120mn passengers a year by 2026, up from 100mn today. The competition is creating an aviation boom that Goel believes will benefit new companies like Archers. The eVTOL industry is growing fast and promises to redefine urban transport. But analysts and industry leaders say only a fraction of the 200 or more startups is expected to survive the competition. The United States' Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) gave Archer the green light for flight testing of its demonstrator aircraft 'Maker' in 2021. But certification deadlines for eVTOL makers keep getting readjusted, underscoring the challenges that need to be addressed in the nascent sector. The Gulf offers the possibility of a quick launch, although Goel said all safety requirements would be rigorously respected. NEOM, the kingdom's flagship giga project, has already launched a joint venture with eVTOL company Volocopter in 2021 and invested $175mn in the company in 2022. (Reuters)
- **Saudi Arabia's Rasan Information Technology prices IPO at top of range -** Saudi Arabian fintech firm Rasan Information Technology has priced its initial public offering on the local bourse at 37 riyals per share, at the top of its indicative price range, according to adviser Banque Saudi Fransi. The company is offering 22.74mn shares, representing a 30% stake. The final offer price implies a market value of around 2.8bn riyals ($746.67mn) for Rasan, with the offering raising gross proceeds of 841.4mn riyals. The Saudi Exchange, the largest and most liquid stock market in the Arab world, has seen a surge in listings over the last few years as part of broad plans to deepen capital markets, grow the private sector and attract investment. Rasan Information Technology, which provides fintech and insurtech services, started operations in 2017 and had served 7.5mn customers in Saudi Arabia by the end of September last year. It posted 256mn riyals in revenue and an adjusted core profit margin of 28% in 2023. (Reuters)
- **Microsoft ties up with UAE-based AI firm to invest $1bn in Kenya data center -** Microsoft (MSFT.O), is partnering with UAE-based AI firm G42 to invest $1bn in a data center in Kenya as part of its efforts to expand cloud-computing services in East Africa, the companies said on Wednesday. The data center, which will be built by G42 and its partners, will be powered by geothermal energy and provide access to Microsoft's Azure through a new cloud region for East Africa. (Reuters)
- **ADNOC to sell about 5.5% additional stake in drilling unit -** Abu Dhabi National Oil Company plans to sell a roughly 5.5% stake in its drilling unit, more than two years after it raised $1.1bn from an initial public offering of part of the business, it said on Wednesday. Additional shares in the unit will be offered to eligible institutional investors, the company said. ADNOC Drilling's shares closed at 4.13 dirhams ($1.12) on Wednesday. At that valuation, the 5.5% stake being offered would be worth $989.6mn. The bookbuilding for the offering of about 880mn shares will begin "immediately" and end on May 23 or earlier, after which the offer price and final number of shares sold will be determined, ADNOC said in a statement. Increasing ADNOC Drilling's free float is expected to lead to the company's inclusion in the Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) Emerging Market Index, ADNOC said. That could happen at the next quarterly index review subject to ADNOC Drilling meeting criteria, it added. After selling an 11% stake in October 2021, ADNOC currently owns 84% of ADNOC Drilling, while Baker Hughes owns a further 5%. The IPO was priced at 2.3 dirhams a share, and the stock soared about 30% on its debut. The new sale "supports ADNOC's commitment to further strengthen the Abu Dhabi equity capital market while creating sustainable value for shareholders across its listed portfolio", the state oil giant said. Egyptian investment bank EFG Hermes, First Abu Dhabi Bank, Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Securities are joint global coordinators and bookrunners for the offering. (Reuters)
- **ADNOC makes fourth gas foray abroad with Mozambique deal -** Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) has bought Galp's (GALP.LS), 10% stake in the Area 4 concession of the multi-billion-dollar natural gas project in Mozambique's Rovuma basin, its fourth international foray into gas. The deal ADNOC announced on Wednesday comes hot on the heels of it acquiring an 11.7% stake in NextDecade's Rio Grande liquefied natural gas (LNG) export facility in Texas, confirmed on Monday. ADNOC has big ambitions in gas and LNG, which along with renewable energy and petrochemicals, it sees as pillars for its future growth. It plans to grow its 6mn metric tons per annum (mtpa) LNG capacity to 15 mtpa. Demand for natural gas soared as Europe scrambled to secure supplies to replace Russian gas in the wake of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine last year. Galp said it would receive around $650mn for its shares and shareholder loans, already net of capital gain taxes when the deal is completed, expected this year. Lease liabilities were $525mn as of end-2023, it added. "Additional contingent payments of $100 m and $400 m will be payable with the final investment decision of Coral North and Rovuma LNG, respectively," Galp said in a statement. Under the terms of the deal, ADNOC will have access to a share of the LNG production from the concession, which will have a combined capacity of more than 25 mtpa, it said in a statement. The Area 4 concession includes the operational Coral South Floating LNG (FLNG) facility, as well as the planned Coral North FLNG development and Rovuma LNG onshore facilities, which Galp said are both expected to be given the green light in 2024/2025. Coral South has a production capacity of 3.5 mtpa while Coral North is expected to add another 3.5 mtpa. The onshore Rovuma development is expected to produce 18 mtpa. The investment "complements ADNOC's efforts to expand its lower-carbon LNG portfolio to meet growing gas demand" and support the energy transition, the company said. The state oil giant views gas as a transition fuel to renewable energy sources. ADNOC Chief Executive Sultan Al Jaber presided over the COP28 climate summit in Dubai last year, where nearly 200 countries agreed to transition away from fossil fuels. Reuters reported in October that ADNOC was on the hunt for LNG assets in Africa and was considering buying Galp's 10% stake in the Rovuma basin, citing two people with knowledge of the matter. In February, ADNOC and oil major BP said they would form a joint venture in Egypt that would initially focus on gas. Last summer, ADNOC said it would acquire a 30% stake in Azerbaijan's Absheron gas and condensate field in the Caspian Sea. ADNOC is also developing a 9.6-mtpa LNG project in Ruwais, west of UAE capital Abu Dhabi, expected to begin commercial operations in 2028. (Reuters)
- **IMF: High oil prices to keep UAE's fiscal, external surpluses strong in 2024 -** Fiscal and external surpluses of the UAE are expected to remain strong

on the back of relatively strong oil prices, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said. The IMF predicted that oil GDP growth is expected to increase this year, including higher crude oil production from the UAE's Opec+ quota increase. "Impacts from geopolitical tensions have been contained thus far, while the authorities delivered a rapid response to the recent flooding episode." The general government surplus is projected to be around 5.0% of GDP in 2024 and public debt is on track to decline further towards 30% of GDP, benefitting from active debt management strategies, an IMF staff team led by Ali Al Eyd said following discussions with the UAE authorities for the 2024 Article IV Consultation. Capital spending is expected to meet ongoing infrastructure needs, and the introduction of the corporate income tax will support non-hydrocarbon revenue with its full implementation in the coming years. The current account surplus is projected at around 9.0% of GDP in 2024, the IMF officials said while projecting an overall real GDP growth of 4.0% in 2024, and average inflation to close to 2.0% "The outlook is subject to uncertainty and external risks, including geopolitical tensions, global growth and financial conditions, and commodity price volatility," the IMF team said in a statement. The IMF officials observed that the broad-based economic growth in the UAE is led by robust activity in the tourism, construction, manufacturing, and financial services sectors. "Foreign demand for real estate, increased bilateral and multilateral ties, and the UAE's haven status continue to drive rapid growth in housing prices and an increase in rents while adding to ample domestic liquidity." "Banks have considerable capital and liquidity buffers overall, and general asset quality has improved, while credit growth is resilient despite higher domestic interest rates," the team said, noting that the Central Bank of the UAE intends to restore the reserve requirements to the historical level of 14% for demand deposits. "We welcome the use of the Dirham Monetary Framework to rein in domestic liquidity and encourage further efforts, as well as continued coordination with the Ministry of Finance on domestic capital market development. Risks from activity in the real estate sector should continue to be closely monitored to tighten related macro-prudential policies if needed. Similarly, further enhancing the monitoring of financial stability risks from climate change is warranted," said the statement. "The efforts to digitalize the financial system and payment landscape are welcome and should continue to follow a risk-conscious approach. The IMF welcomed the major efforts under the National AML/CFT Strategy and Action plan that resulted in the recent removal of the UAE from enhanced monitoring under the Financial Action Task Force and encourage continued progress. The Washington-based Fund said efforts to maintain fiscal prudence should be supported by gradual fiscal consolidation and further fiscal structural reforms to ensure medium-term sustainability. "The economic benefits of the corporate income tax will be gradual. Improvements in tax collection and administration, including through digital means and AI, are welcome and should be supported by further progress in enforcing compliance and building capacity. Enhancement and careful coordination of emirate-specific and federal fiscal rules and objectives in their medium-term fiscal frameworks would ensure a well-defined national fiscal stance." The IMF called for coordinated efforts to advance CEPAs, attract FDI and talent, and fully implement the AI, Digital Economy, and Green strategies. These efforts should be complemented by measures to ensure a level playing field, enhance access to finance, leverage and advance the progress of the Emiratization program, further close the gender gap, and modernize social safety nets. "Continued progress on enhancing data standards and transparency will support improved economic assessment and reform implementation." (Zawya)

- **Emirates NBD raises UAE's non-oil sector growth forecast to 5% -** Emirates NBD has upgraded its growth forecast for the UAE's non-oil sector in 2024 to from 4.5% to 5%, taking headline GDP growth to 3.7% from the previously forecasted 3.3%. In 2023, The UAE's economy grew 3.6% based on preliminary data, "in line with our forecast," said Khatija Haque, Head of Research & Chief Economist. The non-oil sector grew by a faster than expected 6.2% while the oil and gas sector contracted by 3.1%. "We assume no growth in the oil & gas sector this year as oil production is likely to remain constrained by OPEC+ production limits. If there is an increase in the UAE's target production level, this would pose an upside risk to our headline GDP growth forecast," she said. Financial services were the fastest growing sector in 2023, expanding 14.3% year-on-year (YoY) after 6.6% growth in 2022. This was followed by transport and logistics (11.5% YoY), construction and real estate services. Emirate level data showed that Abu Dhabi's non-oil GDP grew 9.1% in 2023, only fractionally slower than the 9.2% growth recorded in 2022. For Dubai, the figures show 3.3% growth in Dubai's GDP last year (based on only Q1-Q3 data that is available), with transport, logistics and hospitality driving the emirate's economy in 2023, followed by information & communication (ICT) and real estate services, the report said. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Monday the UAE was experiencing strong economic growth, with overall real GDP projected to grow by about 4% this year, higher than earlier estimates. The IMF had projected GDP growth for the Gulf oil exporter at 3.5% in 2024 in its most recent Regional Economic Outlook report, published in April. (Zawya)
- **UBS: UAE economy to maintain its positive trajectory throughout 2024 -** Maximilian Kunkel, Chief Investment Officer for the Global Family and Institutional Wealth at UBS, expects the UAE economy to maintain its positive trajectory throughout 2024, supported by several influential structural developments that reflect a positive picture of a more developed and growing future. Kunkel added in statements on the sidelines of a roundtable today to launch the UBS Global Family Office Report 2024, that the factors supporting the growth of the UAE economy are the increase in the size of domestic consumption and the rise in the use of modern technologies, which enhances the efficiency of various economic sectors. He pointed out that the UAE economy is benefiting from the growing support for startups, especially in the fields of technology and innovation, which are attracting increasing attention from international investors. (Zawya)
- **DMCC: UAE among top three global commodity trading hubs -** The United Arab Emirates has once again cemented its leading position as a global commodity trading powerhouse, maintaining its second-place ranking in the Commodity Trade Index presented in the Future of Trade 2024 report by Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC), a report said. The DMCC Commodity Trade Index 2024 evaluates 10 major trading hubs by analyzing three crucial aspects of commodity trade across 10 specific sub-indicators, Emirates News Agency, WAM, said. These indicators capture the essence of locational advantages, commodity wealth across commodities such as coffee, grains and gold, financial services and logistics infrastructure, and institutional strength, offering a holistic view of each hub's role in global trade. The data for these indicators are sourced from global institutions like the World Bank and the United Nations. Against a global landscape of increased trade regionalization borne out of geopolitical tensions, macroeconomic influencers and supply chain restructuring, competitive edges are taking hold for trade hubs that can leverage their relative political neutrality, geographic position, supply of strategic commodities and trade infrastructure. As a result, the UAE continued to dominate in the category of commodity endowment factors (77%) well ahead of all the other trading hubs, driven by its natural supply of oil. The country also scored well in the institutional factors (66%), moving up one place from the previous iteration to come fourth, largely attributed to its attractive tax rates and robust trade logistics infrastructure. The index indicated opportunities for further collaboration and enhancement of trade relations to boost the score for locational and trading partner factors. Feryal Ahmadi, Chief Operating Officer, DMCC, said: "The UAE's continued prominence among the top global commodity trading hubs underscores the country's resilience to headwinds alongside the ambitious vision of our leadership that is driving our growth trajectory. "The strategic location, world-class infrastructure and business-friendly policies in Dubai provide us with a cutting edge that continues to attract businesses and investors from around the world. "The insights gathered from the Commodity Trade Index in our Future of Trade report will guide our path in shaping the future of commerce, driving sustainable growth and fostering meaningful partnerships that reinforce DMCC's efforts to cultivating an environment ripe for businesses to succeed." In 2024, the United States leads the Index with a score of 59%, reflecting strong performance across all categories, while its highest marks come from commodity factors and institutional strength. Notably, Switzerland has ascended to the top three hubs for the first time with a score of 46% coming in strong on locational advantages and institutional factors, signaling its emergence as a significant player in the global

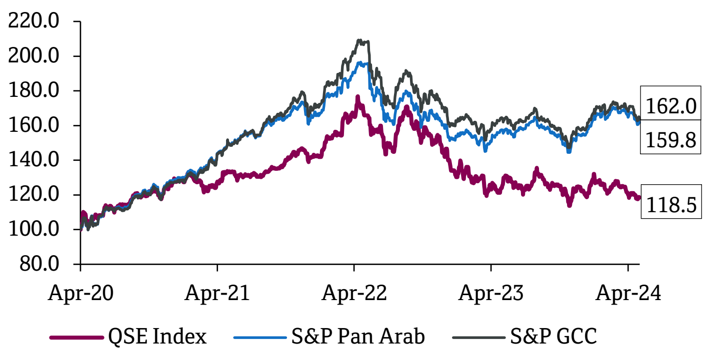
commodities trade landscape. Singapore moved up three places to rank fourth with a score of 44%, while Hong Kong climbed up one position to the fifth place with a score of 41%. The Netherlands (40%) and the United Kingdom (38%) witnessed the biggest falls in the ranking. The shift in the headquarters of oil company Shell from the Netherlands to the UK caused a big dent in the Netherlands' locational score, while the effect of Brexit and the increase in tariffs imposed by trading partners impacted the UK's ranking. The relatively high corporation tax further weakens the UK's score. The bottom three performers remained unchanged, which are China (34%), South Africa (18%) and Nigeria (10%), while rich in natural resources, they lag behind due to weaker institutional support and locational disadvantages. In conclusion, eight of the hubs saw a decline in their Index scores and the gap between the top and bottom performers continued to widen, underscoring the major impact of geopolitical tensions and macroeconomic conditions on global trade. (Zawya)

- **Sharjah's economy demonstrates robust 6.5% growth in 2023 -** Sharjah's Department of Statistics and Community Development (DSCD) has announced substantial growth in the emirate's gross domestic product (GDP) for 2023. The preliminary estimates show a 6.5% surge, reaching approximately AED145.2bn, compared to 136.4bn in 2022, which marked a 4.9% growth from 2021. The newly revealed figures are based on estimates from the comprehensive economic survey conducted from 2017 to 2023, indicating Sharjah's robust economic momentum and competitiveness, bolstering its status among the region's fastest growing and most diverse economies. Non-oil sectors also saw a significant uptick, reaching AED142.5bn in 2023, up from AED133.1bn in 2022, marking a 7.1% increase, reflecting the emirate's economic diversification and investment in alternative sectors, further enriching the local economic structure. The 'wholesale, retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles', 'manufacturing', and 'construction' sectors collectively contributed AED72.5bn, reinforcing Sharjah's status as a leading commercial and industrial hub in the region. Wholesale and retail trade sector leads as highest contributor to GDP In a detailed breakdown of the preliminary GDP components for 2023, the 'wholesale, retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles' sector was the primary economic driver, accounting for 24% (AED34.8bn) of the total GDP output, underscoring the sector's pivotal role in stimulating economic activity and job creation. Meanwhile, the 'manufacturing' sector contributed 16.7% (AED24.3bn) of the total GDP, attributed to the diverse production base and active contributions to advancing the emirate's industrial and knowledge economy. The agriculture and fishing sector records the highest growth Notably, the 'agriculture, forestry, and fishing' sector recorded the highest growth rate at 19.1%, illustrating efforts to enhance food security and sustainability. This was followed by the 'accommodation and food services' sector at 17.5% growth and the 'financial and insurance' sector, which saw a 12.3% increase. The 'electricity, gas, water supply, and waste management' sector also showed solid growth of 7.8%. Other sectors such as 'construction', 'manufacturing', and 'human health and social work' also registered positive growth rates of 7.7%, 7.6%, and 7.1%, respectively. These figures indicate a comprehensive growth in non-oil sectors, boosting the diversification of the local economy and supporting the ongoing development of the emirate, while also enhancing resilience against future economic challenges. Balanced economic growth: Commenting on the preliminary estimates, Sheikh Mohammed bin Humaid Al Qasimi, Chairman of DSCD, said, "The results showcase a strategic transformation in Sharjah's economic landscape, hastening the drive towards diversification and reliance on non-oil sectors, which are fundamental pillars for a more sustainable and thriving economy. This development not only bolsters the economy's resilience in facing global fluctuations but also solidifies Sharjah's status as an attractive investment hub that offers a dynamic business ecosystem and abundant growth prospects." The Chairman added, "Sustainable development requires a balanced distribution of resources across various sectors. The noticeable increase in the contribution of non-oil sectors is an indicator of Sharjah's balanced economic growth and its progress towards an integrated economic model. These indicators are propelling the emirate's sustainable development goals towards achieving societal prosperity and welfare, aligning with the vision of H.H. Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah." The preliminary estimates were based on the comprehensive and ongoing economic survey results from 2017 to 2023, which included all independent bodies and the public sector. This approach adheres to globally recognized methodologies and classifications, reflecting the economic indicators for activities and sectors within the emirate for 2023. (Zawya)

- **UAE: FNC recommends developing regulatory frameworks for industrial activities, green economy -** The Federal National Council (FNC), during a session led by Dr. Tariq Humaid Al Tayer, First Deputy Speaker of the FNC, recommended creating regulatory frameworks for industrial activities and the green economy, emphasizing benefits and exemptions to support economic growth and sustainability. The FNC discussed enhancing legislative and regulatory infrastructure for the industrial sector. Speaking at the session, Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, highlighted the achievements of the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology over the past three years since the launch of Operation 300bn, including the "Make it in the Emirates" initiative. The industrial sector's contribution to the GDP grew from AED132bn in 2020 to AED197bn in 2023, with industrial exports rising from AED117bn to AED187bn, Dr. Al Jaber noted. These efforts created 16,000 jobs for Emiratis. The FNC emphasized the need for collaboration with relevant entities to improve the UAE's knowledge and advanced technology outputs. The council's recommendations will be revised by the Financial, Economic, and Industrial Affairs Committee before being resubmitted for approval and forwarded to the government. (Zawya)

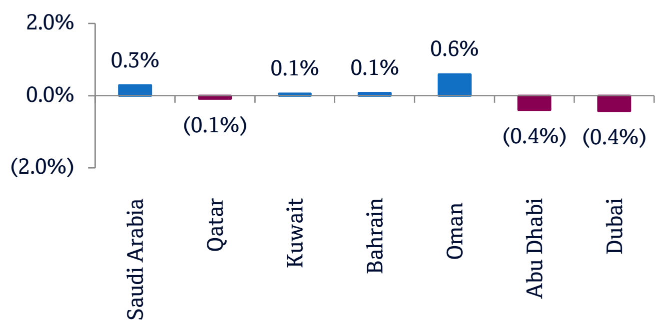
- **Kuwait's April trade surplus with Japan down 4% -** Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan narrowed 4% from a year earlier to JPY 75.5bn ($483mn) in April, down for the second consecutive month due to slow exports, government data showed Wednesday. However, Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 16 years and three months, as exports still offset imports in value, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Overall exports from Kuwait to Japan shrank 8.7% year-on-year to JPY 94.6bn ($605mn) for the second straight month of decline. Meanwhile, Imports from Japan also fell 23.3% to JPY 19.1bn ($122mn), down for the fifth month in a row. Middle East's trade surplus with Japan widened 13.5% to JPY 845.6bn ($5.4bn) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region jumping 15.3% from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 96.3% of the region's total exports to Japan, grew 16.1%. The region's overall imports from Japan surged 20% on demand for automobiles, machinery and manufactured goods. Japan's global trade balance returned to deficit in April with JPY 462.5bn ($3.0bn), as the weak yen boosted imports bills. Exports gained 8.3% from the year before, buoyed by robust shipments of automobiles, and semiconductor-making equipment chips. Imports also increased 8.3% on crude oil and aircraft, as a weaker yen pushed up the value of their imports. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. (Zawya)

Rebased Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Daily Index Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Asset/Currency Performance	Close ($)	1D%	WTD%	YTD%
Gold/Ounce	2,378.85	(1.7)	(1.5)	15.3
Silver/Ounce	30.79	(3.7)	(2.2)	29.4
Crude Oil (Brent)/Barrel (FM Future)	81.90	(1.2)	(2.5)	6.3
Crude Oil (WTI)/Barrel (FM Future)	77.57	(2.1)	(3.1)	8.3
Natural Gas (Henry Hub)/MMBtu	2.51	0.0	2.9	(2.7)
LPG Propane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	71.40	1.4	1.9	2.0
LPG Butane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	70.00	2.9	3.2	(30.3)
Euro	1.08	(0.3)	(0.4)	(2.0)
Yen	156.80	0.4	0.7	11.2
GBP	1.27	0.1	0.1	(0.1)
CHF	1.09	(0.5)	(0.7)	(8.1)
AUD	0.66	(0.7)	(1.1)	(2.8)
USD Index	104.93	0.3	0.5	3.6
RUB	110.69	0.0	0.0	58.9
BRL	0.19	(0.6)	(0.9)	(5.8)

Source: Bloomberg

Global Indices Performance	Close	1D%*	WTD%*	YTD%*
MSCI World Index	3,465.55	(0.4)	(0.2)	9.4
DJ Industrial	39,671.04	(0.5)	(0.8)	5.3
S&P 500	5,307.01	(0.3)	0.1	11.3
NASDAQ 100	16,801.54	(0.2)	0.7	11.9
STOXX 600	521.18	(0.4)	(0.6)	6.6
DAX	18,680.20	(0.3)	(0.4)	9.3
FTSE 100	8,370.33	(0.3)	(0.3)	8.1
CAC 40	8,092.11	(0.7)	(1.2)	5.1
Nikkei	38,617.10	(1.1)	(1.0)	3.9
MSCI EM	1,095.29	0.2	(0.4)	7.0
SHANGHAI SE Composite	3,158.54	(0.0)	(0.1)	4.1
HANG SENG	19,195.60	(0.2)	(1.9)	12.7
BSE SENSEX	74,221.06	0.4	0.5	2.7
Bovespa	125,650.03	(1.9)	(2.7)	(11.6)
RTS	1,203.60	0.4	(0.7)	11.1

Source: Bloomberg ($ adjusted returns if any)*

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