QNB FINANCIAL SERVICES

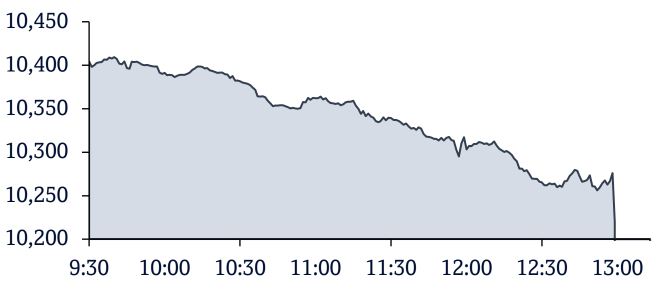
Daily Market Report

Tuesday, 14 January 2025

الخدمات المالية

Financial Services

QSE Intra-Day Movement



Qatar Commentary

The QE Index declined 1.8% to close at 10,219.7. Losses were led by the Telecoms and Banks & Financial Services indices, falling 2.5% and 1.9%, respectively. Top losers were Widam Food Company and National Leasing, falling 3.8% and 3.4%, respectively. Among the top gainers, Doha Insurance Group gained 1.4%, while Vodafone Qatar was up 0.4%.

GCC Commentary

Saudi Arabia: The TASI Index fell 0.1% to close at 12,109.9. Losses were led by the Media and Entertainment and Pharma, Biotech & Life Science indices, falling 2.8% and 1.7%, respectively. Fawaz Abdulaziz Alhokair Co. declined 5.6%, while Jamjoom Pharmaceuticals Factory Co. was down 4.1%.

Dubai The DFM Index gained marginally to close at 5,232.5. The Utilities index rose 0.8%, while the Financials index gained 0.6%. Aramex rose 14.7%, while International Financial Advisors was up 7.6%.

Abu Dhabi: The ADX General Index fell 0.4% to close at 9,459.2. The Health Care index declined 2.4%, while the Real Estate index fell 1.2%. Abu Dhabi National Takaful Co. declined 9.7%, while National Bank of Fujairah was down 8.8%.

Kuwait: The Kuwait All Share Index fell 0.1% to close at 7,483.7. The Health Care index declined 6.9%, while the Consumer Staples index fell 2.4%. Kuwait And Middle East Financial Investment Co. declined 14.8%, while Al-Maidan Clinic for oral and Dental services Co. was down 9.7%.

Oman: The MSM 30 Index fell marginally to close at 4,597.5. Losses were led by the Industrial and Financial indices, falling 1.3% and 0.2%, respectively. Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles Co. declined 9.3%, while National Finance Company was down 5.8%.

Bahrain: The BHB Index fell 2.6% to close at 1,919.5. Aluminum Bahrain declined 10.0, while Bahrain Commercial Facilities Company was down 8.2%.

Market Indicators	13 Jan 25	12 Jan 25	%Chg.
Value Traded (QR mn)	415.2	217.2	91.1
Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn)	600,422.6	610,601.7	(1.7)
Volume (mn)	141.2	88.3	59.8
Number of Transactions	17,257	7,244	138.2
Companies Traded	49	50	(2.0)
Market Breadth	2:47	13:32	–

Market Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	YTD%	TTM P/E
Total Return	23,306.26	(1.8)	(2.1)	(3.3)	11.1
All Share Index	3,653.01	(1.7)	(2.1)	(3.2)	11.6
Banks	4,508.28	(2.0)	(2.8)	(4.8)	9.7
Industrials	4,157.91	(1.4)	(1.3)	(2.1)	14.9
Transportation	5,058.02	(1.5)	(1.0)	(2.1)	12.5
Real Estate	1,559.39	(0.5)	(1.1)	(3.5)	19.3
Insurance	2,318.40	(0.2)	(0.8)	(1.3)	166.0
Telecoms	1,830.66	(2.5)	(2.5)	1.8	11.6
Consumer Goods and Services	7,607.14	(1.4)	(1.4)	(0.8)	16.8
Al Rayan Islamic Index	4,730.81	(1.6)	(2.0)	(2.9)	13.6

GCC Top Gainers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Saudi Industrial Inv. Group	Saudi Arabia	17.68	4.0	4,425.3	5.9
Taiba Investments	Saudi Arabia	44.40	2.9	196.2	8.0
ADES Holdings	Saudi Arabia	18.60	2.8	6,504.3	7.0
Boubyan Bank	Kuwait	605.00	2.2	7,025.7	7.8
Riyad Cable	Saudi Arabia	152.20	2.1	293.3	10.4

GCC Top Losers##	Exchange	Close#	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Aluminium Bahrain	Bahrain	1.16	(10)	320.2	(11.0)
Jamjoom Pharma	Saudi Arabia	156.20	(4.1)	102.6	2.6
Ooredoo	Qatar	11.76	(3.4)	2,409.4	1.8
Saudi Research & Media Gr.	Saudi Arabia	270.60	(3.4)	92.3	(1.6)
Pure Health	Abu Dhabi	3.42	(2.8)	3,617.4	2.7

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%
Doha Insurance Group	2.539	1.4	166.6	1.6
Vodafone Qatar	1.860	0.4	2,198.7	1.6

QSE Top Losers	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Widam Food Company	2.223	(3.8)	263.8	(5.4)
National Leasing	0.743	(3.4)	5,422.4	(4.7)
Ooredoo	11.76	(3.4)	2,409.4	1.8
Salam International Inv. Ltd.	0.640	(3.3)	12,961.4	(3.0)
Qatar International Islamic Bank	10.29	(2.8)	791.4	(5.6)

QSE Top Volume Trades	Close*	1D%	Vol. '000	YTD%
Ezdan Holding Group	0.955	(1.5)	17,862.5	(9.6)
Salam International Inv. Ltd.	0.640	(3.3)	12,961.4	(3.0)
Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co.	1.189	(1.2)	11,892.5	(1.9)
Baladna	1.259	(1.6)	11,635.1	(4.4)
Masraf Al Rayan	2.410	(0.8)	6,731.3	(2.2)

QSE Top Value Trades	Close*	1D%	Val. '000	YTD%
QNB Group	16.45	(1.5)	67,588.5	(4.9)
Industries Qatar	13.00	(1.1)	36,867.0	(2.0)
Ooredoo	11.76	(3.4)	28,943.1	1.8
Qatar Islamic Bank	20.00	(2.7)	27,279.2	(6.4)
Dukhan Bank	3.608	(2.2)	21,120.9	(2.4)

Regional Indices	Close	1D%	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%	Exch. Val. Traded ($ mn)	Exchange Mkt. Cap. ($ mn)	P/E**	P/B**	Dividend Yield
Qatar*	10,219.69	(1.8)	(2.1)	(3.3)	(3.3)	114.28	164,635.9	11.1	1.3	4.2
Dubai	5,232.50	0.1	0.1	1.4	1.4	176.36	249,561.2	10.1	1.5	4.6
Abu Dhabi	9,459.18	(0.4)	(0.0)	0.4	0.4	281.20	739,349.9	16.9	2.5	2.1
Saudi Arabia	12,109.94	(0.1)	0.1	0.6	0.6	1,537.58	2,728,035.4	19.5	2.3	3.6
Kuwait	7,483.71	(0.1)	(0.8)	1.6	1.6	247.99	157,731.3	19.4	1.8	4.0
Oman	4,597.45	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.5	0.5	14.92	32,279.7	11.5	0.9	6.0
Bahrain	1,919.48	(2.6)	(2.7)	(3.3)	(3.3)	3.80	19,804.5	15.5	1.3	9.0

*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 1.8% to close at 10,219.7. The Telecoms and Banks & Financial Services indices led the losses. The index fell on the back of selling pressure from Foreign shareholders despite buying support from Qatari, Arab and GCC shareholders.
- Widam Food Company and National Leasing were the top losers, falling 3.8% and 3.4%, respectively. Among the top gainers, Doha Insurance Group gained 1.4%, while Vodafone Qatar was up 0.4%.
- Volume of shares traded on Monday rose by 59.8% to 141.2mn from 88.4mn on Sunday. Further, as compared to the 30-day moving average of 112.0mn, volume for the day was 26.0% higher. Ezdan Holding Group and Salam International Inv. Ltd. were the most active stocks, contributing 12.7% and 9.2% to the total volume, respectively.

Overall Activity	Buy%*	Sell%*	Net (QR)
Qatari Individuals	27.31%	17.56%	40,469,381.48
Qatari Institutions	28.83%	25.60%	13,400,816.46
Qatari	**56.14%**	**43.16%**	**53,870,197.94**
GCC Individuals	0.16%	0.06%	432,355.61
GCC Institutions	5.36%	4.96%	1,645,582.05
GCC	**5.52%**	**5.02%**	**2,077,937.66**
Arab Individuals	8.30%	6.46%	7,675,214.91
Arab Institutions	0.14%	0.00%	580,812.50
Arab	**8.44%**	**6.46%**	**8,256,027.41**
Foreigners Individuals	4.12%	2.40%	7,135,442.25
Foreigners Institutions	25.78%	42.96%	(71,339,605.26)
Foreigners	**29.90%**	**45.36%**	**(64,204,163.01)**

*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
01-13	China	National Bureau of Statistics	Exports YoY	Dec	10.70%	7.50%	6.70%
01-13	China	National Bureau of Statistics	Imports YoY	Dec	1.00%	-1.00%	-3.90%
01-13	China	National Bureau of Statistics	Trade Balance	Dec	$104.84b	$100.00b	$97.44b

Earnings Calendar

Tickers	Company Name	Date of reporting 4Q2024 results	No. of days remaining	Status
QIBK	Qatar Islamic Bank	15-Jan-25	1	Due
DUBK	Dukhan Bank	16-Jan-25	2	Due
DHBK	Doha Bank	19-Jan-25	5	Due
QATR	Al Rayan Qatar ETF	20-Jan-25	6	Due
ABQK	Ahli Bank	20-Jan-25	6	Due
CBQK	The Commercial Bank	21-Jan-25	7	Due
GWCS	Gulf Warehousing Company	21-Jan-25	7	Due
QFLS	Qatar Fuel Company	22-Jan-25	8	Due
MARK	Masraf Al Rayan	23-Jan-25	9	Due
MKDM	Mekdam Holding Group	25-Jan-25	11	Due
QNCD	Qatar National Cement Company	26-Jan-25	12	Due
QFBQ	Lesha Bank	26-Jan-25	12	Due
NLCS	National Leasing Holding	26-Jan-25	12	Due
BEMA	Damaan Islamic Insurance Company	26-Jan-25	12	Due
VFQS	Vodafone Qatar	27-Jan-25	13	Due
QGTS	Qatar Gas Transport Company Limited (Nakilat)	28-Jan-25	14	Due
QIIK	Qatar International Islamic Bank	28-Jan-25	14	Due
IHGS	Inma Holding	02-Feb-25	19	Due
QEWS	Qatar Electricity & Water Company	04-Feb-25	21	Due
QLMI	QLM Life & Medical Insurance Company	04-Feb-25	21	Due

Qatar

- **QNB Group: Disclose the Annual financial statement of 2024 - Income statement results:** Net profit for the year ended 31 December 2024 reached QAR16.7bn, an increase of 8% compared to same period last year, demonstrating the stable nature of QNB Group's financial results. Operating Income increased by 6% to reach QAR41.3bn, which reflects the Group's ability to maintain successful growth across a range of revenue sources. QNB Group's efficiency (cost to income) ratio stood at 22.3%, which is considered one of the best ratios among large financial institutions in the MEA region.
  Balance sheet drivers: Total Assets as at 31 December 2024 reached QAR1,298bn, an increase of 5% from 31 December 2023, mainly driven by growth in loans and advances by 7% to reach QAR911bn. Customer deposits increased by 3% to reach QAR887bn from 31 December 2023, due to successful diversification of deposit generation.
  Credit quality: The ratio of non-performing loans to gross loans stood at 2.8% as at 31 December 2024, one of the lowest amongst financial institutions in the MEA region, reflecting the high quality of the Group's loan book and the effective management of credit risk. In addition, loan loss coverage ratio stood at 100%, which reflects the prudent approach adopted by the Group towards non-performing loans. Also, during the year, loan loss charge for the year decreased to QAR8.1bn, representing a decrease of 6% compared to December 2023.
  Regulatory ratios: QNB Group's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) as at 31 December 2024 amounted to 19.2%. Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) and Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) as at 31 December 2024 amounted to

179% and 101% respectively. These ratios are higher than the regulatory minimum requirements of the QCB and Basel III reforms requirements.
EPS: The Earnings per share (EPS) amounted to QR 1.69 as of 31st December 2024 versus Earnings per share (EPS) QR 1.55 for the same period in 2023.
Dividend: For the second half of the year ended 31 December 2024, the Board of Directors have recommended to the General Assembly for the distribution of a cash dividend of 37% of the nominal share value (QR0.37 per share), increasing the total dividend distribution for the year ended 31 December 2024 to 70% of the nominal share value (QAR0.70 per share). (QSE, QNBFS)

- **QNB Group will hold its investors relation conference call on 15/01/2025 to discuss the financial results -** QNB announces that the conference call with the Investors to discuss the financial results for the Annual 2024 will be held on 15/01/2025 at 12:30pm, Doha Time. (QSE)
- **Aamal announces its intention to establish a New Company based in Saudi Arabia, offering Integrated Solutions in Construction and Infrastructure -** Aamal Company, one of the region's leading diversified companies, is pleased to announce its intention to establish a new company in Saudi Arabia as a subsidiary of Aamal Company. This promising addition to Aamal's investment portfolio will be part of the Industrial Manufacturing sector, one of the Company's key operating sectors. The newly established company will specialize in a broad range of activities aimed at providing integrated solutions in the construction and infrastructure sector. These include project design and participation in tenders, technical and engineering supervision and consulting services, production of precast concrete elements such as pillars and walls, manufacturing high-quality concrete pipes for water and wastewater networks, transportation and installation services for concrete components, quality control and inspections, comprehensive project management solutions, engineering solution development, and custom-built construction components based on demand. On this occasion, Mr. Rashid bin Ali Al-Mansoori, Chief Executive Officer of Aamal, commented: "The establishment of the new company is a part of Aamal's strategic plan to expand its operations and enhance its presence in new and promising markets, with Saudi Arabia being one of the most dynamic regional and global markets at present. Through this company, we aim to strengthen our regional expansion by establishing a solid business base in Saudi Arabia. It also opens new avenues for exploring opportunities in vital sectors such as technology and energy, while underpinning Aamal's position in the construction and infrastructure industry through sustainable strategic growth. Moreover, this step diversifies Aamal's revenue streams and maximizes the Company's long-term economic and strategic benefits. The launch of the new arm in Saudi Arabia underscores our commitment to contributing to infrastructure development at the regional level. We are confident that this new venture will play a key role in realizing our aspirations and strengthening our partnership with the promising Saudi market. Together, we aim to build a more innovative and advanced future." (QSE)
- **Ooredoo announces Date to Pay Interest to Bondholders -** Ooredoo announces that Ooredoo International Finance Limited (OIFL), its wholly-owned subsidiary, pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Notes and the Final Terms, will pay its Global Medium Term Note (GMTN) holders' interest payment on 31 January 2025. Below is the announcement in full: U.S. $500,000,000 @ 4.50%. Guaranteed Notes due 31 January 2043 (ISIN Code: 144 A- US74735K2C55, Reg S - XS0881740384) (the "Notes") Issued by Ooredoo International Finance Limited (the "Issuer") The Issuer a wholly owned subsidiary of Ooredoo Q.P.S.C hereby gives notice that pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Notes and the Final Terms, it will pay Noteholders U.S. 11,250,000.00 on the Interest Payment Date falling due on 31 January 2025. U.S. $500,000,000 @ 3.875%. Guaranteed Notes due 31 January 2028 (ISIN Code: 144 A- US74735K2B72, Reg S - XS0880134258) (the "Notes") Issued by Ooredoo International Finance Limited (the "Issuer") The Issuer a wholly owned subsidiary of Ooredoo Q.P.S.C hereby gives notice that pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Notes and the Final Terms, it will pay Noteholders U.S. 9,687,500.00 on the Interest Payment Date falling due on 31 January 2025. (QSE)
- **Qatar Electricity & Water Co.: To disclose its Annual financial results on 04/02/2025 -** Qatar Electricity & Water Co. to disclose its financial statement for the period ending 31st December 2024 on 04/02/2025. (QSE)
- **Qatar National Cement Co.: To disclose its Annual financial results on 26/01/2025 -** Qatar National Cement Co. to disclose its financial statement for the period ending 31st December 2024 on 26/01/2025.
- **Inma Holding: To disclose its Annual financial results on 02/02/2025 -** Inma Holding to disclose its financial statement for the period ending 31st December 2024 on 02/02/2025. Inma Holding also announced that the conference call with the Investors to discuss the financial results for the Annual 2024 will be held on 03/02/2025 at 01:30pm, Doha Time. (QSE)
- **Doha Bank will hold its investors relation conference call on 23/01/2025 to discuss the financial results -** Doha Bank announces that the conference call with the Investors to discuss the financial results for the Annual 2024 will be held on 23/01/2025 at 01:30pm, Doha Time. (QSE)
- **Damaan Islamic Insurance Company will hold its investors relation conference call on 28/01/2025 to discuss the financial results -** Damaan Islamic Insurance Company announces that the conference call with the Investors to discuss the financial results for the Annual 2024 will be held on 28/01/2025 at 01:30pm, Doha Time. (QSE)
- **Qatar Tax Agency announces Shura Council's approval of amendments to income tax law -** The Qatari General Tax Authority Dec. 23, 2024, announced the Shura Council's approval of amendments to the Income Tax Law. The amendments include measures to: 1) introduce a 15% global minimum corporate tax rate, applicable to multinational companies and enterprises with foreign branches generating annual revenues exceeding 3bn Qatari riyals ($823mn), including Qatari companies with branches abroad and international companies with branches in Qatar; 2) explain that individual taxpayers and local companies in Qatar are excluded from the new global minimum corporate tax rate and that they will maintain the current 10% rate; and 3) allow multinational companies to file their tax returns for the Domestic Minimum Top-up Tax (QDMTT) in Qatar, ensuring compliance with the standards established by the OECD and the G20. [Qatar, General Tax Authority, 12/23/24]. (Bloomberg)
- **Brazil Regulator approves Qatar Holding, Sauber Holding deal -** Brazil antitrust regulator Cade's superintendence approved the deal without restrictions, according to official gazette and agency's website. (Bloomberg)
- **AlRayan Bank successfully integrates with QA-RTGS -** AlRayan Bank, in partnership with ProgressSoft, has successfully integrated with the Qatar Central Bank (QCB)'s new Real-Time Gross Settlement system (QA-RTGS), setting new standards for efficiency, security, and reliability in the banking sector. The integration aligns with the bank's commitment to fully complying with QCB's latest regulatory requirements and adopting the latest technologies to deliver faster, more secure, and more reliable banking services for its clients, while fully supporting QCB's visionary initiatives to strengthen Qatar's financial ecosystem. This was achieved through the implementation of ProgressSoft's Payments Hub RTGS Module, facilitating the settlement of high-value interbank transactions in real time, and providing a secure, efficient, and scalable solution capable of managing growing transaction volumes with zero disruption to its banking services. "By embracing advanced technologies and aligning with the QCB's innovative initiatives, we continue to enhance the efficiency, security, and reliability of our services. This achievement underscores our commitment to supporting Qatar's financial ecosystem and empowering our clients with seamless, real-time banking experiences," said Fahad bin Abdullah al-Khalifa, Group chief executive officer of AlRayan Bank. The implementation is fortified with robust security standards, including ISO 20022, to safeguard transactional data and enable secure high-value payment capabilities. It also enhances customer service efficiency and the ability to meet the evolving needs of the market in a reliable and scalable approach. "This achievement highlights our shared commitment to innovation and excellence in advancing Qatar's financial infrastructure," according to Amjad Zawyani, ProgressSoft Qatar's country manager. AlRayan Bank and ProgressSoft

remain committed to supporting Qatar's ongoing financial transformation. (Gulf Times)

- **Qatar's online services market sees upsurge in demand -** According to analysts at the leading research entity Statista, Qatar's e-services market is poised for remarkable growth in the years ahead. Market demand continues to surge due to government-driven digital transformation efforts and increasing online service usage by citizens and residents for convenience and efficiency, Data released by the market analysts platform indicates that the revenue from the online service market is estimated to amount to $1,628m (QR5.9bn) In 2025. Researchers emphasize that it is also anticipated that the market will witness a steady annual growth rate of 12.58% from 2025 to 2029, resulting in a projected market volume of $2,615mn during the forecast period. Meanwhile, the data notes that the online food delivery sector under e-services is also expected to show positive Trajectory growth by the end of 2025. The report projects that the e-food delivery market Is expected to attain a revenue growth of 28.1% from the current year leading up to 2026. Moreover, experts at Statista highlight that the online food delivery market in Qatar is gearing up to report significant market volume in the forth coming years, with a projected value of $1,616m by the end of this year. Statista researchers also outline that from a global analytical viewpoint, China Is expected to generate the highest revenue in the Online Food Delivery market, reaching $545.80bn this year. On the other hand, the report states that Qatar's average revenue per user (ARPU) in the Online Food Delivery market is predicted to reach $1,058 in 2025. Additionally, the number of users in this market is expected to reach 1.8mn users in the next four years in Qatar. However, in terms of user penetration, the online food delivery market is estimated to have a penetration rate of 55.4% in the current year. The report further states that "This indicates the percentage of the population that will be utilizing online food delivery services across the country." Industry leaders commented that the government's Initiatives and projects in the e-services market enable Qatar to transform into a leading online market, augmenting and bolstering the growing GDP. (Peninsula Qatar)

- **Doha emerges as second safest city globally in Risk Map 2025 -** A new study by Safeture and Riskline reveals the safest cities in the world for 2025, with Doha coming second behind Switzerland's Bern. The study, based on a comprehensive analysis of global travel risks, considers various factors such as security, crime, health, and environmental risks to determine the safest destinations. The results highlight the Importance of these cities' robust Infrastructure, low crime rates, and proactive safety measures in ensuring a secure environment for both residents and visitors. According to the study, Melbourne, Montreal and Muscat follow the top 2 in that order, while Ottawa, Seoul, Singapore, The Hague and Tokyo complete the list of the top ten safest cities in the world. Commenting on the new result, the Qatari Embassy in Switzerland noted in its recent X (formerly Twitter) post that the development is a proud moment for Switzerland and Qatar as both countries celebrate this shared achievement. "According to the RiskMap2025 by Safeture and Riskline, Bern & Doha have been ranked as the top 2 safest cities in the world. A proud moment for Switzerland and Qatar as we celebrate this shared achievement SafestCitles Doha Bern," the embassy posted. In giving the rankings, Safeture and Riskline noted that both Doha and Bern have consistently demonstrated a commitment to safety and security, making them Ideal destinations for travelers seeking peace of mind. "The study reveals a concerning trend of Increasing global travel risks, particularly in regions affected by political instability, health crises, and natural disasters," It added. It would be recalled that Doha, and by extension, Qatar, was last year ranked the third lowest crime rate out of the 311 global cities indexed by Numbeo in its Crime Index 2024 Mid-Year report. The report had listed Doha as having a crime Index of just 16.1. The Numbeo Index measures perceived crime rates based on factors such as theft. violence, and vandalism. Numbeo's Crime Index Is an estimation of the overall level of crime in a given city or country. It considers crime levels lower than 20 as very low, crime levels between 20 and 40 as low, crime levels between 40 and 60 as moderate, crime levels between 60 and 80 as high, and crime levels higher than 80 as very high. (Peninsula Qatar)

- **Qatar's trade with GCC up 64% in 2024 -** Qatar's trade volume with the five Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has seen a 63.75% increase in 2024, according to data published by the National Planning Council (NPC). Qatar's bilateral trading volume with the five nations totaled QR35.13bn in first eight months of 2024, rising from QR21.458bn in the same period of 2023. 2024 full year data is yet to be published. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) emerged as Qatar's largest trading partner in the GCC countries, followed by Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain. In the first eight months of 2024, Qatar's bilateral trade volume with the UAE stood at QR18.9bn, according to NPC. Of the total amount, Qatar exported goods and services worth QR14.865bn while imports from the UAE were valued at QR4.038bn. Major exports included petroleum gases and other gaseous hydrocarbons, vessels for the transport of persons or goods, and acyclic hydro- carbons. Major Imports from the UAE during this period were copper wire and gold. Qarar's single largest exports to the UAE were petroleum gases and other gaseous hydrocarbons worth QR8.8bn in the January-August 2024 period. The largest Import categories were copper wire at over QR1bn and gold at QR640mn. Bilateral trade with Kuwait stood at QR7.36bn in same period. Qatari exports stood at QRS.18bn, while imports from Kuwait were valued at QR2.184bn. Among major exports and imports, Qatar exported petroleum gases and other gaseous hydrocarbons worth OR4.6bn to Kuwait and Imported petroleum oils and oils from bituminous minerals worth QR1.7bn during the eight months Oman stood third in the GCC with trade volume hitting QR4.8bn in the eight months. Qatari exports to Orman stood at QR2.1bn and Imports at QR2.648bn with trade deficit of QR476m. Among major categories, Qatar Imported petroleum oils and oils from bituminous minerals (crude) worth QR1.3bn. Major Qatari exports included petroleum oils and oils from bituminous minerals (not crude) worth QR899m, chemicals worth QR686m, and pig iron worth QR219m. Trade with Saudi Arabia stood at QR3.3bn. Of this, QR2.39bn were exports and QR910m imports. The largest category of exports to Saudi Arabia were motor cars and other motor vehicles, worth QR663.5m. Other major exports Included petroleum oils and oils from bituminous minerals (not crude) worth QR425.6m, tugs and pusher craft worth QR186.7m. The single largest Imports from Saudi Arabia were bread, pastry, cakes, biscuits etc. worth QR62.2m. Bilateral trade with Bahrain stood at QR744.2m. Of this, QR127.4m were exports and OR616.7m were imports. Qatar Imported iron ores and concentrates worth QR445.6m from Bahrain, while major Qatari exports to Bahrain included bars and rods of iron, and articles of jewelry. During August 2024, UAE was also Qatar's fourth largest trading partner globally, with exports worth QR2.639bn and imports worth QR650m in 2024 so far, China, South Korea, India, Singapore and Japan remain Qatar's largest export destinations. while top five countries Qatar imported from remain China, United States, Italy, India and Japan. (Peninsula Qatar)

- **National Digital Authentication and Trust Services Strategy 2024-2026 launched -** The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) has launched the National Digital Authentication and Trust Services Strategy 2024-2026. The strategy supports Qatar's digital transformation by introducing a comprehensive framework tailored to the needs of individuals and businesses, aligning with the Digital Agenda 2030, the Third National Development Strategy, and Qatar National Vision 2030. In a press release issued on Monday, the MCIT said that it seeks, through this strategy, to establish a legal, regulatory, and technical framework for an integrated digital system that enhances user trust in electronic services. This framework fosters a trusted digital environment that facilitates collaboration among individuals, government entities, and the private sector. It added that one of the key benefits of digital authentication at the national level is the ability to create a personal digital identity, allowing users to access electronic service platforms without the need to create multiple digital identities across different platforms. This not only enhances information security but also simplifies access to electronic services. The press release said that at the heart of the National Digital Authentication and Trust Services Strategy lies the concept of a unified digital identity, which establishes a unified, secure identity enabling users to access electronic services seamlessly. The strategy enables individuals and businesses to access government and private sector digital services seamlessly, eliminating the need for multiple accounts. Additionally, digital identity enhances data security and the confidentiality of personal information, fostering trust between users and service providers. This initiative is vital for achieving integration across various sectors and stimulating innovation in delivering advanced digital services that meet the community's diverse needs. The MCIT added that this strategy aims to achieve a range of national objectives designed to support Qatar's comprehensive digital transformation. By enhancing the security and confidentiality of information exchanges in electronic services, the strategy ensures these services are readily accessible to stakeholders. It focuses on increasing the adoption of electronic services while maintaining their safety and efficiency. Additionally, the strategy seeks to improve the digital user experience and reduce reliance on paper documentation, fostering trust in electronic services, lowering costs, and decreasing government expenditure. The strategy also promotes job creation within the digital economy, encouraging innovation and sustainability through the introduction of cutting-edge digital services. Furthermore, the strategy aims to strengthen the integration of digital systems across government and private sectors in a secure and comprehensive manner. Assistant Undersecretary for Digital Government Affairs at MCIT Mashael Ali Al Hammadi highlighted the importance of the strategy, emphasizing its role as a cornerstone for Qatar's digital transformation journey. Hammadi said, "Through this strategy, MCIT aims to enhance trust in electronic services by developing an advanced technical and legislative infrastructure. "We believe that digital innovation is the key to achieving Qatar National Vision 2030. This strategy reflects our commitment to providing reliable and secure digital services that improve lives and bolster the national economy's competitiveness, aligning with the fourth pillar of the Digital Agenda 2030." The strategy adopts a phased, structured approach to achieving comprehensive digital transformation. Initially, it focuses on strengthening the existing digital authentication ecosystem. The next phase involves expanding interconnectivity between government entities and private organizations to enhance collaboration and service delivery. Subsequently, efforts will be directed toward developing a legislative and regulatory framework that governs trust services while boosting their effectiveness. Finally, the strategy ensures the sustainability of the system by transitioning it into full operation under advanced governance frameworks that have been pre-established. (Qatar Tribune)

- **QBA hosts key meeting with ministers to strengthen Govt-Pvt sector collaboration -** The Qatari Businessmen Association (QBA) hosted a significant meeting with Minister of Commerce and Industry HE Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal Al Thani and Minister of State for Foreign Trade Affairs HE Dr Ahmed bin MohamedAl Sayed. Held at QBA's headquarters in Doha, the meeting served as a platform to enhance communication between the government and the private sector, fostering collaboration to drive Qatar's economic development. The meeting brought together prominent figures from Qatar's business community, including QBA Chairman Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani, QBA First Deputy Hussein Al Fardan, and board members such as Sheikh Hamad bin Faisal Al Thani, Sheikh Nawaf bin Nasser Al Thani, Sherida Al Kaabi and SaudAl Mana. QBA members Sheikh Mansour bin Jassim Al Thani, Khalid Al Mannai, Salah Al Jaidah, Moataz Al Khayyat, Ibrahim Al Jaidah, Ashraf Abu Issa, Abdul Salam Issa Abu Issa, Faisal Al Mannai, Abdullah Al Kubaisi, Maqbool Habib Khalfan, Rashid Al Mansouri, Mohammed Althaf, Ihsan Al Khyiami and AbdulrazzaqAl Kuwari. Notable attendees also included representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry including Mohammed Hassan Al Malki, Undersecretary, and Saleh Majid Al Khulaifi, Assistant Undersecretary for Industry and Business Development Affairs. The discussions emphasized the importance of aligning public and private sector efforts to support the national economy. Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani expressed appreciation for the ministry's initiatives, including the Qatar National Manufacturing Strategy 2024–2030, which underscores the government's commitment to empowering local institutions and fostering entrepreneurship. Sheikh Faisal praised the Qatari business community's contributions to promoting Qatar as a regional investment hub. He acknowledged the QBA's initiatives in organizing delegations to international markets and its efforts in attracting investors through conferences and workshops. These activities, he noted, have significantly enhanced Qatar's global competitiveness and opened new avenues for collaboration with international markets. QBA members shared ideas and aspirations to bolster the private sector's role in sustainable economic development. They addressed issues related to investment facilitation, financing, and legislative procedures. Sheikh Faisal reiterated that the private sector is a cornerstone of the national economy and lauded the ministry's collaborative approach. During the meeting, various challenges and potential solutions were discussed. Saud Al Mana highlighted the importance of facilitating access to industrial land and supporting factory operations to attract foreign investment. Moataz Al Khayyat addressed the significant challenges faced by the construction industry, including disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, rising shipping costs, and increased fuel prices. The participants agreed to hold a dedicated meeting to devise strategies for this critical sector. Other members raised concerns related to e-commerce, trade exhibitions, and the protection of local products. These discussions aimed to identify actionable steps to strengthen these sectors. Sheikh Nawaf Nasser bin Khaled Al Thani emphasized the success of the Obstacle Resolution Committee, which has effectively resolved several private sector issues in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. He proposed the establishment of a joint committee with the Prime Minister's Office to further streamline business operations and address challenges faced by both local and foreign investors. As the meeting concluded, QBA Chairman Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani presented honorary shields to HE Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal Al Thani and HE Dr Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Sayed. This gesture symbolized the QBA's gratitude for their continued efforts in fostering a robust partnership between the government and the private sector. The meeting underscored the pivotal role of collaboration between Qatar's government and its dynamic business community in driving the nation's economic growth. By addressing challenges, proposing innovative solutions, and fostering dialogue, the Qatari Businessmen Association and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry are paving the way for a resilient and competitive economy. Their shared commitment to sustainable development will undoubtedly contribute to Qatar's vision of becoming a leading global investment destination. (Qatar Tribune)

International

- **Global electric vehicle sales up 25% in record 2024 -** Global sales of fully electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles rose by a quarter last year to over 17 million cars, helped by a fourth consecutive month of record sales in December as China continued to grow and Europe stabilized, data showed on Tuesday. Incentives and emission targets pushed EV sales in China and aided Britain in overtaking Germany as Europe's biggest battery-electric market in 2024, research firm Rho Motion said. Electric car makers look into 2025 as a transformative year as China's sales growth slows, new emissions targets are setting off in Europe, and questions surround potential U.S. policy changes under the incoming Trump administration. Global sales of fully electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids rose 25.6% year-on-year to 1.9mn in December, albeit slowing for a second consecutive month, the Rho Motion data showed. Sales in China jumped 36.5% to 1.3mn vehicles in December, and totaled 11mn for the whole of 2024. In the United States and Canada, EV sales rose 8.8% to 0.19mn in December, while Europe reported sales of 0.31mn, up 0.7% from the same month of 2023. In the rest of the world, December sales rose by 26.4%. (Reuters)

- **China exports accelerate amid trade tensions, imports surprise -** China's exports gained momentum in December, with imports also showing recovery, though strength at the year-end was in part fueled by factories rushing inventory overseas as they braced for heightened trade risks under a Trump presidency. Exports have been a vital growth engine for the $18tn economy, which is still burdened by a prolonged property crisis and shaky consumer confidence. While policymakers can find solace in recent policy measures keeping the economy on track for an "around 5%" growth target, challenges such as potential U.S. tariff hikes cloud the outlook for 2025. U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, set to return to the White House next week, has proposed hefty tariffs on Chinese goods, sparking fears of a renewed trade war between the two superpowers. Adding to the challenges, unresolved disputes with the European Union over tariffs of up to 45.3% on Chinese electric vehicles threaten to hinder China's ambitions to expand its auto exports and help address deflationary overcapacity concerns. "Trade front-loading became more visible in December as a result of both Chinese New Year effects and Donald Trump's inauguration," said Xu Tianchen, senior economist at the Economist Intelligence Unit. China's biggest festival runs from Jan. 28 to

Feb. 4. "Import growth could be underpinned by stockpiling of commodities like copper and iron ore, as part of (China's) 'buy low' strategy," he added. Outbound shipments in December rose 10.7% year-on-year, customs data showed on Monday, beating 7.3% growth forecast in a Reuters poll of economists, and improving from November's 6.7% increase. Imports surprised to the upside with 1.0% growth, the strongest performance since July 2024. Economists had expected a 1.5% decline. China's trade surplus grew to $104.8bn last month, up from $97.4bn in November. Its trade surplus with the U.S. widened to $33.5bn over the same period from $29.81bn a month prior. A Chinese customs spokesperson told reporters there was still "huge" room for China's imports to grow this year. Buoyed by a weakening yuan, Chinese manufacturers managed to find buyers overseas in 2024 to compensate for depressed domestic demand by continually reducing prices, analysts said. As a result, China's exports grew by an annual 5.9% last year, while imports increased just 1.1% over the same period. "The double-digit rise in December exports (led by the U.S. and ASEAN), along with the increase in the PMI new export orders, supports our earlier judgement that the threat of tariffs could affect export patterns in the next couple of quarters, with a potential boost in shipments before the introduction of new tariffs, followed by a drop-off," Barclays analysts said in a note. "Overall, we think the modest increase in imports and easing CPI inflation suggest the recent domestic demand recovery is still too shallow and too weak." (Reuters)

Regional

- **112,000 GCC citizens employed in public sector, 21,200 in private sector -** The data issued by the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat) showed significant progress in the Gulf Common Market, reflecting major developments in the workforce across both public and private sectors in GCC countries. The number of GCC citizens working in the public sector in GCC member states in 2023 reached about 11.2 thousand compared to 12.2 thousand in 2007. Meanwhile, private sector employment for GCC citizens grew to 21.2 thousand, up from 17.9 thousand in 2007. The data revealed that 4,000 citizens from other GCC countries worked in the UAE's public sector during 2018, with an increase of 164.1% compared to 2007 figures. Omanis comprised 86.4% of the workforce, followed by Bahrainis at 7.2%, while the rest of the GCC citizens constituted 6.4%. Private sector workers in the UAE for GCC citizens reached 9,000 in 2021. Omanis formed the majority in 2021, making up 57.8%, followed by Saudis at 30% and other GCC citizens at 12.2%. In Bahrain, 535 citizens from other GCC countries worked in the private sector during 2023, with a decrease of 10.5% compared to 2007 figures. Saudis comprised the majority, 71.8%, followed by Omanis at 21.5% and other GCC citizens at 6.7%. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia saw 13 citizens from other GCC countries working in the public sector in 2023, an increase of 8.3% compared to 2007 figures. Kuwaitis were the majority, 46.2%, followed by Bahrainis at 38.5% and other GCC citizens at 15.3%. Also, 8.8 thousand GCC citizens worked in the private sector in Saudi Arabia during 2023, an increase of 658.7% compared to 2007. Bahrainis were the majority, making up 48.8%, followed by Omanis at 25.4% and other GCC citizens at 25.8%. Oman's public sector in 2023 saw 59 citizens from other GCC countries, a 47.5% increase compared to 2007. Emiratis constituted the majority, making up 39%, followed by Bahrainis at 32.2% and other GCC citizens at 28.8%. However, 39 citizens from other GCC countries worked in Oman's private sector in 2023, with a decrease of 24.3% compared to 2007. Bahrainis constituted the majority, making up 53.4%, followed by Saudis at 27.5% and other GCC citizens at 19.1%. In Qatar, GCC citizens in the public sector during 2023 reached 1.1 thousand, with a decrease of 18.8% compared to 2007. Omanis constituted the majority, making up 45.6%, followed by Saudis at 35.6% and other GCC citizens at 18.8%. Private sector employment in Qatar reached 1.2 thousand, increasing 131.2% compared to 2007. Saudis constituted the majority, making up 35.2%, followed by Bahrainis at 28.6% and other GCC citizens at 36.2%. In Kuwait, GCC citizens in the public sector in 2023 reached about 5.8 thousand, with a decrease of 38.1% compared to 2007. Saudis constituted the majority, making up 93.5%, followed by Omanis at 3.2% and other GCC citizens at 3.3%. The private sector in 2023 saw 1.5 thousand, with a decrease of 90.3% compared to 2007. Saudis constituted the majority, making up 75.3%, followed by Bahrainis at 16.8%, Omanis at 7.3%, and Emiratis at 0.6%. The GCC's focus on facilitating labor mobility across member states and promoting Gulf citizenship remains a top priority, reflected in decisions from the Supreme Council since 2000. Several ministerial committees have been formed to enhance workforce integration within the region. (Zawya)

- **Saudi Arabia plans to enrich and sell uranium -** Saudi Arabia plans to monetize all minerals, including by selling uranium, Saudi energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said on Monday. "We will enrich it and we will sell it and we will do a 'yellowcake,'" Prince Abdulaziz told a conference in Dhahran, referring to a powdered concentrate of the mineral used to prepare uranium fuel for nuclear reactors. It requires safe handling although it poses few radiation risks. Saudi Arabia has a nascent nuclear program that it wants to expand to eventually include uranium enrichment, a sensitive area given its role in nuclear weapons. Riyadh has said it wants to use nuclear power to diversify its energy mix. It is unclear where Saudi nuclear ambitions will end, since Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in 2018 that the kingdom would develop nuclear weapons if regional rival Iran did. Fellow Gulf state the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has the Arab world's first multi-unit operating nuclear energy plant. The UAE has committed not to enrich uranium itself and not to reprocess spent fuel. The kingdom said last year it planned to scrap light-touch oversight of its nuclear facilities by the U.N. atomic watchdog and switch to regular safeguards by the end of 2024. Riyadh has yet to fire up its first nuclear reactor, which allows its program to still be monitored under the Small Quantities Protocol (SQP), an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency that exempts less advanced states from many reporting obligations and inspections. (Reuters)

- **UK to sign critical minerals partnership with Saudi Arabia -** Britain will sign a minerals cooperation partnership with Saudi Arabia that could help strengthen supply chains, create opportunities for British businesses and attract investment into the UK, the British government said on Tuesday. WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: Britain needs a secure, long-term supply of critical minerals, such as copper, lithium and nickel, which are used to make smartphones and electric cars, but are also vital to build data centers that help develop artificial intelligence systems. On its part, Saudi Arabia, which estimates the value of its untapped mineral resources at $2.5tn, is aiming to become a major global hub for critical minerals trade. CONTEXT: For Britain, the deal will form part of a broader industrial strategy that it says will be key to both national security and its objective to boost economic growth and create jobs. The partnership also comes as British and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) negotiators continue talks this week about a free trade agreement. (Reuters)

- **Saudi-Japanese Business Council convenes in Riyadh with over 80 company representatives -** The Saudi-Japanese Joint Business Council Meeting convened in Riyadh with the participation of Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih and Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Muto Yoji. The meeting saw attendance from over 80 representatives of companies and entities from both nations. The Japanese delegation included representatives from industrial and commercial companies, as well as financial institutions focusing on modern technologies with an interest in the Saudi market. During the meeting, participants reviewed and explored opportunities to enhance investment partnerships across a wide range of economic sectors outlined in the Saudi-Japan Vision 2030. Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih emphasized the critical role of the Joint Business Council and the Japan Cooperation Center for the Middle East (JCCME) in strengthening bilateral relations and advancing economic cooperation. He highlighted the Saudi-Japan Vision 2030 as a cornerstone of the strategic partnership between the two nations. Al-Falih praised Japanese brands for their innovation and excellence, which have garnered significant admiration in the Saudi market. He encouraged Saudi companies to collaborate with these brands. He also noted that Saudi-Japanese cooperation has expanded to include non-traditional sectors such as renewable energy, the automotive industry, biotechnology, financial services, artificial intelligence, healthcare, water, and electronic games. Al-Falih showcased the Kingdom's attractive investment incentives. Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Muto Yoji highlighted the importance of private sector participation in bilateral meetings, emphasizing its role in supporting trade and economic relations. He pointed to promising prospects for Saudi-Japanese partnerships, particularly in industry and advanced technologies. Secretary General of the Federation of Saudi Chambers Waleed Alorainan commended the strong and evolving Saudi-Japanese relationship, characterized by cooperation across various fields. He noted that the shared vision of the two countries serves as a crucial step in strengthening their strategic partnership and emphasized the role of the Joint Business Council as a fundamental pillar of their economic ties. Chairman of the Joint Business Council Tariq Al-Qahtani urged Japanese companies to take advantage of the incentives offered by the Kingdom. He highlighted Saudi Arabia's strategy, which aligns with Japan's competitive advantages in areas such as heavy and advanced industries, electronic chip manufacturing, electronic games, and education. Al-Qahtani also noted that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries has reached $41bn. (Zawya)

- **571 global companies moved their headquarters to Saudi Arabia -** Minister of Investment Eng. Khalid Al-Falih said that the initiative of moving regional headquarters of global companies to Saudi Arabia is proceeding steadily well in a way accomplishing its goals. "The number of international companies licensed to establish their headquarters and moved to the Kingdom has reached 571, most of which have opened their offices in the King Abdullah Financial Center in Riyadh. The largest share of them are industrial companies, and incentives will be provided to these companies through various programs. Al-Falih made the remarks during a dialogue session in Riyadh on Saturday on the sidelines of the launch of the Standard Incentives Program for the industrial sector. He said the first phase of the incentives was launched two years ago, during which 33 projects worth SR310bn were provided with incentives. Al-Falih said that the industrial sector contributes 30% of the foreign investment balance in the Kingdom, with a growth of 61%, and most of the licenses for international companies granted by the Ministry of Investment are also for manufacturing industries. Al-Falih highlighted that the Standard Incentives Program constitutes a significant step toward realizing the ambitions of Vision 2030 and the National Investment Strategy, both of which aim to attract and expand industrial investments while boosting the competitiveness of Saudi industry. He said that Saudi Arabia has achieved SR142bn in investment in manufacturing industries during the first three quarters of 2024. "The industrial sector is at the heart of Vision 2030," he added. (Zawya)
- **Oman and Saudi Arabia sign MoU to boost financial cooperation -** The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Saudi Ministry of Finance today to enhance collaboration in the financial sector. The agreement was signed by H E Sultan Salim al Habsi, Omani Minister of Finance, and Mohammed Abdullah al Jadaan, Saudi Minister of Finance. The MoU aims to strengthen bilateral ties, exchange expertise in financial fields, and foster joint coordination on regional and international matters. It also focuses on the development of financial policies, analysis of public financial data, and streamlining financial and legal regulations. Additionally, the agreement seeks to promote effective governance practices within the public sector. This initiative is expected to enhance cooperation and contribute to the advancement of financial systems in both countries. (Zawya)
- **Abu Dhabi's ADQ plans to launch takeover of Aramex, boost logistics portfolio -** Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund ADQ plans to launch a takeover offer for Aramex (ARMX.DU), bidding for the shares it does not already own in the courier firm, according to a bourse filing on Monday, as it works to bolster its logistics holdings. The cash offer will be launched through ADQ's unit Q Logistics Holding at a price of 3 dirhams ($0.82) per share, a premium of around 30% to Dubai-listed Aramex's closing price on Friday of 2.31 dirhams a piece. The offer would value the logistics firm at 4.39bn dirhams ($1.2bn), according to Reuters calculations. Shares in Aramex opened up 14.7% at 2.65 dirhams per share on Monday. Aramex provides logistics and transportation services including domestic and international express delivery via road, air and sea, with operations in over 65 countries, according to its website. ADQ was established in 2018 and has a broad portfolio of domestic assets, including Abu Dhabi state carrier Etihad Airways and Abu Dhabi Ports Company, through which it holds a 22.69% stake in Aramex. The fund had $225bn in assets under management at the end of June, according to a document seen by Reuters. Q Logistics Holding said in a statement on Monday it believed that Aramex "has potential to play a central role" to help ADQ achieve objectives for the wider local economy. It added, however, that Aramex's recent results and financial performance required a "strategic and operational transformation," which it expected to be "complex, capital intensive and to take time." As of Monday, "there are no arrangements entered into between Q Logistics Holding and Aramex", ADQ's unit said in the statement, without providing a timeline for the offer. Rothschild is acting as Q Logistics Holding's financial adviser while Emirates NBD capital is the lead manager. (Reuters)
- **Dubai's world beating property rally shows signs of strain -** Shiny new towers and villa communities will again spring up in Dubai this year as developers pile into one of the world's biggest property booms. Yet there are growing signs that the record rally in prices is slowing. Every week, builders are breaking ground on homes they say are selling out within days or even hours. But some, including Dubai's largest developer Emaar Properties PJSC, are starting to see the need for more caution. The emirate's property boom has already continued for several years, its longest rally since homeownership was first opened to foreigners in 2002. "Our expectations are the market will still do well next year here and globally. There is a positive sentiment for business especially with Trump coming in," Emaar's founder and Managing Director Mohamed Alabbar said in December. But Emaar is now growing more wary of raising prices too much because it could "kill the golden goose," Alabbar said. Dubai would need to keep attracting new residents to fill the homes being built. It also needs to provide affordable housing to avoid pushing expats out of the city at a time many are grappling with the global surge in inflation and rising costs of living. Already, nearly a fifth of Dubai's homes are valued above $1mn, according to the property firm Knight Frank. It predicts that residential prices will rise an average 8% in 2025, moderating from the eye-popping 20% jump of the previous year. Meanwhile, Dubai's prime home prices will rise 5% this year, the firm predicts, topping London's 2% and New York's 3%. Emaar – best known for building the world's tallest tower — is set to complete 6,000 to 7,000 homes a year by the peak of 2026 and 2027, according to Bloomberg Intelligence. But Dubai's rally is leaving many questioning the sustainability of a market where much of the new supply is sold via instalments ahead of construction. It's a strategy that comes with risks because some buyers may not complete payments. The strength of the US dollar, to which the United Arab Emirates has pegged its currency, also makes local property more expensive for many overseas buyers. An influx of new residents including wealthy investors, crypto millionaires and rich Indians seeking second homes has helped drive up demand. Dubai's population stood at 3.8mn in 2024, up from 3.66mn in 2023. Rents have also surged, pricing out many from their homes and helping drive residents into outskirts developments on the edge of the desert. "The demand is still there but sales are slowing down as prices and rents have definitely hit a ceiling," said Yasin Valimull, chief executive officer at property broker The Luxury Address, who specializes in high end sales. Brokers say sales are starting to slow especially in the off-plan market. Buyers of such homes purchased ahead of construction are having to reduce prices to sell before completion, with the median price falling down to 1,600 dirhams ($436) a square foot from 1,700 dirhams in 2023, according to data by the researcher REIDIN. For developers, the good times are rolling on for now. SOHO, a developer, has managed to sell 84 out of 110 apartments in one of its towers. "Real estate is a cyclical business and this cycle has got legs," said Sahil Khosla, CEO of SOHO, said in a recent interview. "The city and the country have got their act together, where they offering the golden visas. They're attracting businesses, they're attracting international funds to move here." Khosla said his payment plans are geared toward end users who can pay half during construction and half after completion, when buyers can lineup mortgages. "Still, we're so cautious and we're very strategic," Sahil Khosla said. "We're very slowly developing." Meanwhile, Imran Farooq, chairman of Samana, said his company had record monthly sales in September. That came after an exceptionally strong performance in July, which is typically a slow month for the developer, which is one of the biggest providers of homes below 1mn dirhams. Emaar is among the best barometers for the health of the market. Its profit in 2025 is likely to hit 13bn dirhams as many developments under construction are completed, according to analyst estimates compiled by Bloomberg. That's a surge

from profits of about 3.8bn dirhams in 2021. Still, the steady supply of new homes has the potential to limit prices. Dubai's property developers launched a record number of new housing developments in 2024, according to REIDIN, with a total of nearly 140,000 homes having been either started or announced by developers across 588 projects. And for many property firms, the big challenge will now be to complete the projects. "We've had a record year and frankly we're short of breath," said Alabbar who says Emaar's property sales surged 70% in 2024 from a year earlier. "That's a big stretch for contractors, suppliers, architects and the overall market and the biggest risk is execution." (Gulf Times)

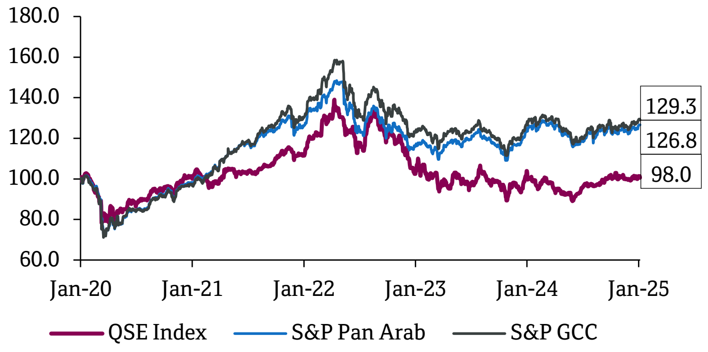
- **Go-ahead for Bahrain-UAE mutual taxation agreement -** A mutual taxation agreement between Bahrain and the UAE was unanimously approved by the Shura Council yesterday. Financial and economic affairs committee rapporteur Sadiq Al Rahma stressed that double taxation avoidance agreements effectively helped create a stable investment environment by avoiding the imposition of double taxes on the same income in two different countries and by removing tax barriers. "These agreements provide the necessary protection for individuals and companies from double taxation, and also encourage companies and individuals to invest mutually in the two countries, thus enhancing the flow of capital and investments to the local economy," he said. "The agreements help enhance transparency and exchange of information between tax authorities in different countries, which helps combat tax evasion and achieve tax justice." The UAE's investments in Bahrain amount to $2bn, according to Finance and National Economy Minister Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa. Bahrain's exports to the UAE exceeded $1bn annually while imports totaled more than $1bn.There are 110 branches of UAE companies in Bahrain, 1,200 Bahraini companies with UAE investors, 6,900 Emirati nationals own stocks in Bahrain Bourse, 3,000 Emiratis own property in Bahrain and 1,978 Emiratis are licensed to conduct business in Bahrain. Meanwhile, the upper chamber of the National Assembly also approved a similar agreement with Hong Kong. "We have so far signed 45 similar agreements with several countries," said Shaikh Salman. The committee's rapporteur, Hisham Al Qassab, stressed that the draft law aims to develop economic, commercial and investment opportunities and enhance co-operation in tax matters between Bahrain and Hong Kong. The council decided to approve the two agreements as a whole, with the final vote to be taken on it in the next session. Meanwhile, Shura Council secretary-general Kareema Al Abbasi read out a statement on the Bahrain Diplomatic Day, which falls tomorrow. She also notified members about written responses from ministers. (Zawya)
- **Sharjah approves draft law on natural resources corporate tax -** Sharjah Consultative Council (SCC) approved a draft law on extractive and non-extractive natural resources corporate tax in the Emirate of Sharjah. The decision came during the council's seventh meeting, held at its headquarters in Sharjah, as part of its work for the second regular session of the eleventh legislative term. The meeting was presided over by Dr. Abdullah Belhaif Al Nuaimi, Chairman of the Council, in the presence of officials. The draft law is the first of its kind in the UAE, aiming to regulate the imposition of tax on companies operating in the extraction and use of natural resources, including both mineral extraction and other related activities. It also represents a significant advancement in the ongoing development of Sharjah's financial system and reflects the emirate's commitment to balancing economic development with environmental sustainability. Sheikh Rashid bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Director of Sharjah Finance Department, explained that the draft law is part of a broader effort to develop the tax system in Sharjah, ensuring effective governance and compliance with regulatory provisions. Hatem Mohamed Al Mosa, Director-General of the Department of Petroleum and Executive Director of the Sharjah National Oil Corporation (SNOC), emphasized the project's significance in enhancing the Department's operations and overseeing the activities of related companies, which contribute to supporting the economy of Sharjah. During the session, the council members emphasized the law's importance in supporting the national economy. They highlighted a strong commitment to sustainable development and the conservation of natural resources. The draft law seeks to establish a comprehensive legislative framework that regulates economic activities related to natural resources. This framework aims to increase public revenues to support development projects within the emirate. (Zawya)
- **Oman's general import index rises 1.1% -** The general index of import prices in the Sultanate of Oman rose by 1.1% during the third quarter of 2024 compared to the same quarter of 2023. Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that key contributors to this increase was led by miscellaneous manufactured goods by 11%, beverages and tobacco by 6.7%, food and live animals by 5.7%, machinery and transportation equipment by 5.3%, chemicals and related materials by 4.3%, raw materials by 4.3%, manufactured goods classified primarily by material by 1.6% and vegetable and animal oils, fats and waxes by 0.9%. In contrast, however, mineral fuels and related materials decreased by 22.2%. Despite the annual uptick, the third quarter of 2024 saw a 4.8% drop as the prices for beverages and tobacco witnessed a big drop at 22.4%, followed by mineral fuels and related materials at 11.6%, chemicals and related materials at 10.8%, and miscellaneous manufactured goods at 10.2%. Manufactured goods classified primarily by material and machinery and transportation equipment also saw decreases of 7.2% and 3.9%, respectively. In contrast, raw materials experienced a notable 32% surge quarter-on-quarter, with vegetable and animal oils, fats, and waxes climbing by 9.2%, and food and live animals rising by 3.5%. (Zawya)
- **Five new industrial cities prepped for investment across Oman -** The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) is preparing to add five new industrial cities to its expanding portfolio of manufacturing hubs that are at the heart of the Omani government's drive to boost the country's non-oil economy. Strategically located in key governorates around the country, these new hubs open up millions of square meters of new acreage for industrial investment. Madayn is currently overseeing the initial infrastructure development of these clusters, designed to ensure that the requisite road, drainage, electricity and water services networks, as well as other support facilities, are in place to attract all manner of local and international investment. While a number of proposed industrial cities are now in the embryonic stages of conceptualization, at least five others are preparing to open their doors to investors. The list includes Ibri Industrial City – a 10mn m2 park in Al Dhahirah Governorate targeted at primarily oilfield, mining and quarrying related investments. Around RO 9mn has been earmarked for the hub's infrastructure development. In Musandam Governorate, infrastructure works at the new Mahas Industrial City are nearly complete. The facility is suited for investments related to light and medium manufacturing, and the food sector. Al Suwaiq Industrial City in North Al Batinah, covering an area of 10mn m2, is also gearing up for investors eyeing opportunities in the food and pharmaceutical industries and logistics services sectors. North Al Sharqiyah Governorate will host its first manufacturing hub when Al Mudhaibi Industrial City launches sometime this year. An initial area of around 2.5mn m2 is being readied for investment in the first phase. Finally, Thamrait Industrial City is taking shape in Dhofar Governorate with a focus on mining and light manufacturing related activities. According to a report in the latest edition of Duqm Economist, the newsletter of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), the geographical size of Madayn's industrial cities grew by around 20% to a total of 140.3mn m2 at the end of H1 2024, up from 114.3mn m2 in H1 2020. Total investment inflows into Madayn's portfolio climbed to RO 7.4bn during this period, up from RO 6.8bn in H1 2020. Significantly, existing industrial cities are also undergoing a wave of expansions to cater to growing investor demand. Suhar Industrial City added Phase 7 to its already sizable acreage following infrastructure improvements worth around RO 13mn. Likewise, Nizwa Industrial City saw the expansion of Phases 3 and 4 at a cost of RO 5.5mn, while Sur Industrial City witnessed over RO 10mn worth of infrastructure development. Samayil Industrial City's infrastructure is presently being developed at a cost of more than RO 40mn. Other hubs benefitting from expansion and modernization programs are: Al Mazunhah Free Zone (with RO 6mn in investments), Raysut Industrial City (RO 3mn), and Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM), where Madayn has earmarked RO 7mn towards the construction of the ring road and associated services, including storm water drainage solutions. (Zawya)

- **Oman's industrial contribution to the GDP current prices reaches $10.62bn -** Oman's industrial sector has achieved significant growth, with its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current prices reaching OMR4.09bn by the end of June 2024, representing 19.5% of the total GDP, which stands at OMR20.9bn. The manufacturing industries took the largest share, contributing more than OMR2.19bn, accounting for 10.5% of the GDP. Other industrial activities contributed OMR1.9bn, equivalent to 9.1%. Mazin bin Hamid Al Siyabi, Assistant Director-General of Industry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, stated that the contribution of manufacturing industries increased by 10.5% in the first half of 2024, compared to 9.4% in 2023 and 8% in 2020. This improvement reflects the progress of the industrial sector and the success of government policies in promoting economic growth. In a statement to the Oman News Agency, Al Siyabi highlighted Oman's efforts to build a strong industrial future aligned with its aspirations. Over the past five years, Oman has achieved numerous accomplishments in the industrial sector, most notably the Royal endorsement of the Industrial Strategy 2040 in May 2024. The ministry organized a series of discussion sessions involving all stakeholders to hand over the initiatives related to the strategy. He added that indicators show the industrial sector played an increasingly important role in Oman's economy. The total contribution of industrial activities to the GDP at current prices was about OMR5.88bn in 2020, rising to OMR6.88bn in 2021 and OMR7.7bn in 2023, with a contribution rate of 19.1%. This rate reached 19.5% in the first half of 2024. Al Siyabi emphasized that this continuous growth reflects the effectiveness of government development plans aimed at enhancing production capacities and stimulating investments. He noted the significant increase in industrial license applications, which rose by 62% from 12,100 applications in 2020 to more than 135,000 applications by the end of November 2024. (Zawya)

- **Oman's economy shows strong growth amid economic reforms -** Since His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's ascension to the throne, Oman's economy has experienced notable growth, underpinned by ongoing efforts to diversify sources of income, enhance non-oil revenues, and stimulate private sector participation. These reforms have translated into significant improvements in the country's economic performance, with the government working steadfastly to reduce the fiscal deficit, promote sustainable financial stability, and boost overall productivity. In pursuit of these goals, the government launched a medium-term financial plan (2020-2024), which focused on rationalizing spending, broadening government revenue sources, and strengthening social protection mechanisms. The success of these initiatives has laid strong foundations for achieving long-term fiscal sustainability. A crucial part of this effort is the National Program for Financial Sustainability and Financial Sector Development (2023-2025), which aims to develop a vibrant and innovative financial sector, providing diversified financing solutions for sustainable economic growth. The private sector has emerged as a key driver of the nation's economic progress, particularly in the diversification of non-oil sectors. Initiatives like the Nazdaher Program (National Program for Private Sector Development and Foreign Trade) have been pivotal in unlocking opportunities for private companies, fostering innovation, and creating new avenues for investment. A number of significant strategic projects, such as the Duqm Refinery Project and the Fish Canning and Value-Added Complex in Duqm, alongside renewable energy ventures, have contributed to the country's economic transformation. These projects have not only attracted domestic and foreign investments but have also strengthened Oman's position as a global investment destination. On the fiscal front, Oman has made commendable progress in reducing public debt. By the end of 2024, the country's public debt was estimated to stand at approximately RO14.4bn (34% of GDP), a significant decrease from RO19.8bn (68% of GDP) in 2020. This decline is the result of rigorous fiscal measures, including enhanced efficiency in public spending and an increase in non-oil revenues, compounded by higher oil prices. The sultanate's credit ratings have improved notably over the past few years, reflecting positive economic developments. Standard & Poor's upgraded Oman's rating from B+ in 2020 to BBB- in 2024, while Fitch moved its rating from BB- to BB+ with a positive outlook. Similarly, Moody's raised Oman's rating from Ba3 to Ba1, underscoring investor confidence in Oman's economic management and growth trajectory. Oman's economy recorded a remarkable GDP growth of 38% in 2023, surpassing the expected target. The real GDP at current prices reached approximately RO40.7bn, driven by a 27.8% growth in the oil sector and 6.2% growth in non-oil activities. This was complemented by an increase in the average price of Omani crude oil, which surged to $80.7 per barrel, a 75% increase from 2020 levels. This economic momentum is expected to continue, with real GDP growth projections of 2.7% for 2025. The country also experienced a steady rise in total investments, which grew by an average of 11.7% from 2021 to 2023, reaching RO10.9bn. (Zawya)

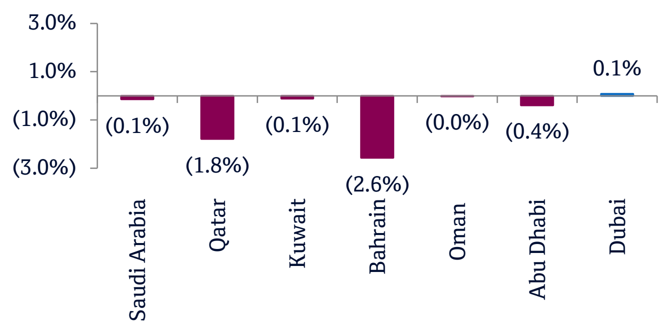
- **Oman makes strides towards global competitiveness in 2024 -** In 2024, Oman made impressive strides across a range of global competitiveness indices, highlighting the success of the sultanate's robust transformation strategies in economic growth, digital development, environmental sustainability, and governance. These significant achievements underscore the sultanate's determination to position itself as a competitive, forward-looking economy on the global stage. Among the most notable achievements was Oman's remarkable rise in the Environmental Performance Index, where the country advanced 95 places, climbing from 149th to 54th globally. In an earlier statement, H E Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, attributed this leap to national efforts, underscoring the country's commitment to environmental sustainability. In the Economic Freedom Index, Oman jumped 39 places, now ranking 56th globally, up from 95th. The sultanate also made progress in the UN's e-Government Development Index, advancing nine places from 50th to 41st. These achievements highlight Oman's focus on governance, transparency, and digital transformation. H E Saqri explained that these improvements are not merely numerical gains but have deeper implications for Oman's development. "These rankings show our commitment to the ambitious goals of Oman Vision 2040 and demonstrate the effectiveness of integrated development policies." Oman has also made remarkable progress in the digital sphere, with significant gains across key global benchmarks. According to the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT), the sultanate is increasingly making its mark in the digital economy. In the Network Readiness Index, Oman climbed four places to rank 50th, a crucial measure of a country's ability to harness information and communication technologies effectively. Additionally, in the e-Government Development Index, Oman achieved a noteworthy nine-place improvement, moving from 50th in 2022 to 41st in 2024. These achievements highlight Oman's strides in integrating technology into public services and governance. In cybersecurity, Oman continues to be one of the global leaders with 97.02 points in the Global Cybersecurity Index for 2024. This progress reflects the sultanate's rigorous efforts to enhance digital security measures and protect its growing digital infrastructure. Oman also made notable progress in the Artificial Intelligence Readiness Index, climbing five positions to 45th in 2024. This advancement aligns with the government's focus on leveraging AI to foster innovation across various sectors. These achievements stem from the National Program for Digital Economy, which includes multiple strategic initiatives such as the Government Digital Transformation Program, the National Artificial Intelligence Program, and the Advanced Digital Technologies Program. The Cybersecurity Industry Program and the Digital Infrastructure Program have also played pivotal roles in strengthening Oman's digital landscape. The Ministry of Economy also reviewed the gains made during the 10th Five-Year Development Plan (2021-2025), which include strategic programs, legislative developments and regulatory reforms. These efforts have bolstered the sultanate's financial sustainability, improved the business environment and expanded digital government services. Oman is currently preparing to join the World Bank's Business Readiness Index in 2025, a critical indicator that assesses governments' efforts in fostering private sector growth. The National Competitiveness Office said it is working closely with international bodies, such as World Economic Forum and the World Bank, leading efforts to improve Oman's performance across key global indices. "Our progress on global indices is a clear indication of the path we are on – a path of sustainable growth and competitiveness on the world stage," H E Saqri stated. (Zawya)

Rebased Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Daily Index Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Asset/Currency Performance	Close ($)	1D%	WTD%	YTD%
Gold/Ounce	2,663.16	(1.0)	(1.0)	1.5
Silver/Ounce	29.61	(2.6)	(2.6)	2.5
Crude Oil (Brent)/Barrel (FM Future)	81.01	1.6	1.6	8.5
Crude Oil (WTI)/Barrel (FM Future)	78.82	2.9	2.9	9.9
Natural Gas (Henry Hub)/MMBtu	4.40	6.8	6.8	29.4
LPG Propane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	90.50	3.1	3.1	11.0
LPG Butane (Arab Gulf)/Ton	122.00	3.4	3.4	2.2
Euro	1.02	0.0	0.0	(1.1)
Yen	157.48	(0.2)	(0.2)	0.2
GBP	1.22	(0.0)	(0.0)	(2.5)
CHF	1.09	(0.1)	(0.1)	(1.1)
AUD	0.62	0.5	0.5	(0.2)
USD Index	109.96	0.3	0.3	1.4
RUB	110.69	0.0	0.0	58.9
BRL	0.17	(1.0)	0.5	(1.4)

Source: Bloomberg

Global Indices Performance	Close	1D%*	WTD%*	YTD%*
MSCI World Index	3,674.92	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.9)
DJ Industrial	42,297.12	0.9	0.9	(0.6)
S&P 500	5,836.22	0.2	0.2	(0.8)
NASDAQ 100	19,088.10	(0.4)	(0.4)	(1.2)
STOXX 600	508.68	(0.8)	(0.8)	(1.1)
DAX	20,132.85	(0.7)	(0.7)	(0.6)
FTSE 100	8,224.19	(0.7)	(0.7)	(2.1)
CAC 40	7,408.64	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.9)
Nikkei	39,190.40	0.0	0.0	(2.1)
MSCI EM	1,039.11	(1.7)	(1.7)	(3.4)
SHANGHAI SE Composite	3,160.76	(0.2)	(0.2)	(6.1)
HANG SENG	18,874.14	(1.0)	(1.0)	(6.1)
BSE SENSEX	76,330.01	(2.0)	(2.0)	(3.6)
Bovespa	119,006.93	0.3	0.3	0.3
RTS	1,151.93	(0.0)	0.0	6.3

Source: Bloomberg ($ adjusted returns if any)*

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