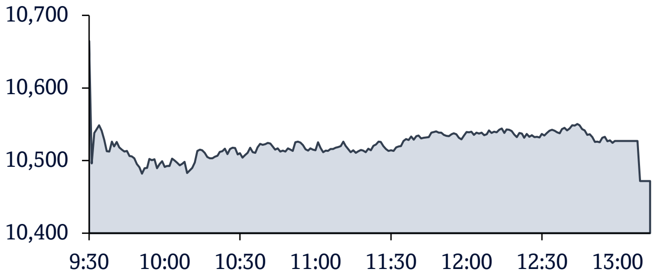
# Daily Market Report

*Sunday, 26 February 2023*

## *QSE Intra-Day Movement*




## *Qatar Commentary*

The QE Index declined 1.8% to close at 10,472.0. Losses were led by the Banks & Financial Services and Transportation indices, falling 2.6% and 0.8%, respectively. Top losers were Qatar Islamic Bank and QLM Life & Medical Insurance Co., falling 9.7% and 7.1%, respectively. Among the top gainers, Qatar Insurance Company gained 10.0%, while Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Co. was up 8.9%.

## *GCC Commentary*

***Saudi Arabia:*** The TASI Index fell 1.1% to close at 10,153.3. Losses were led by the Energy and Banks indices, falling 1.8% and 1.6%, respectively. Tihama Advertising & Public declined 6.0%, while Halwani Bros. Co. was down 3.5%.

***Dubai:*** The DFM Index gained 0.2% to close at 3,419.0. The Consumer Discretionary index rose 3.0%, while the Utilities index gained 0.4%. Takaful Emarat rose 4.4% while Amlak Finance was up 4.2%.

***Abu Dhabi:*** The ADX General Index gained 0.1% to close at 9,858.9. The Real Estate index rose 1.9%, while the Consumer Discretionary index gained 0.7%. Fujairah Building Industries rose 5.9%, while National Cooperation for Tourism & Hotels was up 4.9%.

***Kuwait:*** The Kuwait All Share Index fell 0.5% to close at 7,266.9. The Technology index declined 1.2%, while the Banks index fell 0.8%. Salbookh Trading Co. declined 21.8%, while Arkan Al Kuwait Real Estate Co. was down 9.1%.

***Oman:*** The MSM 30 Index gained 0.3% to close at 4,650.2. Gains were led by the Financial and Industrial indices, rising 0.9% and 0.2%, respectively. Oman United Insurance rose 9.8%, while Ahli Bank was up 7.0%.

***Bahrain:*** The BHB Index gained 0.2% to close at 1,939.3. The Consumer Discretionary index rose 1.9%, while the Communications Services index gained 0.2%. Solidarity Bahrain rose 4.0%, while Gulf Hotels Group was up 2.6%.

| Market Indicators | 23 Feb 23 | 22 Feb 23 | %Chg. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Value Traded (QR mn) | 445.6 | 350.5 | 27.2 |
| Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn) | 603,630.5 | 611,446.8 | (1.3) |
| Volume (mn) | 123.8 | 116.0 | 6.7 |
| Number of Transactions | 14,097 | 11,670 | 20.8 |
| Companies Traded | 49 | 48 | 2.1 |
| Market Breadth | 19:28 | 17:26 | – |

| Market Indices | Close | 1D% | WTD% | YTD% | TTM P/E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Return | 21,732.75 | (1.4) | (1.1) | (0.7) | 11.9 |
| All Share Index | 3,388.87 | (1.3) | (4.4) | (2.4) | 119.9 |
| Banks | 4,290.47 | (2.6) | (6.6) | (5.5) | 11.6 |
| Industrials | 3,991.31 | 0.2 | (0.2) | 5.6 | 11.8 |
| Transportation | 4,133.66 | (0.8) | 1.7 | (4.7) | 11.8 |
| Real Estate | 1,417.59 | (0.7) | (1.1) | (9.1) | 14.7 |
| Insurance | 1,939.53 | 5.2 | (4.5) | (11.3) | 17.2 |
| Telecoms | 1,361.68 | (0.2) | (1.6) | 3.3 | 48.7 |
| Consumer Goods and Services | 7,535.39 | (0.3) | (1.8) | (4.8) | 21.8 |
| Al Rayan Islamic Index | 4,500.03 | (1.2) | (1.2) | (2.0) | 8.6 |

| GCC Top Gainers## | Exchange | Close# | 1D% | Vol. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ahli Bank | Oman | 0.17 | 7.0 | 101.3 | (1.2) |
| Dar Al Arkan Real Estate | Saudi Arabia | 13.46 | 3.5 | 9,770.5 | 15.8 |
| Aldar Properties | Abu Dhabi | 4.60 | 2.2 | 12,466.9 | 3.8 |
| Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait | Kuwait | 0.34 | 2.1 | 504.1 | 5.2 |
| BBK | Bahrain | 0.54 | 1.3 | 22.2 | 8.4 |

| GCC Top Losers## | Exchange | Close# | 1D% | Vol. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qatar Islamic Bank | Qatar | 18.33 | (9.7) | 4,294.0 | (1.2) |
| Savola Group | Saudi Arabia | 27.05 | (3.0) | 310.2 | (1.5) |
| Saudi Electricity Co. | Saudi Arabia | 21.14 | (2.8) | 853.0 | (8.5) |
| Yanbu National Petro. Co. | Saudi Arabia | 41.35 | (2.2) | 476.2 | (0.6) |
| Riyad Bank | Saudi Arabia | 26.35 | (2.2) | 2,113.5 | (17.1) |

*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% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qatar Insurance Company | 1.653 | 10.0 | 6,633.8 | (14.0) |
| Qatar General Ins. & Reins. Co. | 1.087 | 8.9 | 11.1 | (26.0) |
| Mannai Corporation | 8.198 | 3.0 | 958.0 | 8.0 |
| Zad Holding Company | 14.40 | 2.9 | 6.8 | (1.4) |
| Qatar Industrial Manufacturing Co. | 3.063 | 2.8 | 0.1 | (4.6) |

| QSE Top Volume Trades | Close* | 1D% | Vol. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Estithmar Holding | 1.837 | (4.2) | 24,727.1 | 2.1 |
| Masraf Al Rayan | 2.739 | 0.3 | 11,307.8 | (13.6) |
| Doha Bank | 1.621 | (2.2) | 9,782.5 | (17.0) |
| Dukhaan Bank | 2.899 | 0.0 | 9,567.5 | 0.0 |
| Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co. | 1.656 | 0.4 | 7,388.3 | 8.9 |

| QSE Top Losers | Close* | 1D% | Vol. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qatar Islamic Bank | 18.33 | (9.7) | 4,294.0 | (1.2) |
| QLM Life & Medical Insurance Co. | 3.615 | (7.1) | 3.3 | (24.7) |
| Estithmar Holding | 1.837 | (4.2) | 24,727.1 | 2.1 |
| Baladna | 1.311 | (2.9) | 423.4 | (14.4) |
| Dlala Brokerage & Inv. Holding Co. | 0.764 | (2.6) | 2,603.1 | (33.1) |

| QSE Top Value Trades | Close* | 1D% | Val. '000 | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qatar Islamic Bank | 18.33 | (9.7) | 79,668.2 | (1.2) |
| Industries Qatar | 13.84 | 0.7 | 61,070.4 | 8.0 |
| Estithmar Holding | 1.837 | (4.2) | 45,427.4 | 2.1 |
| QNB Group | 16.11 | (2.1) | 41,199.1 | (10.5) |
| Masraf Al Rayan | 2.739 | 0.3 | 30,999.1 | (13.6) |

| Regional Indices | Close | 1D% | WTD% | MTD% | YTD% | Exch. Val. Traded ($ mn) | Exchange Mkt. Cap. ($ mn) | P/E** | P/B** | Dividend Yield |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qatar* | 10,471.97 | (1.8) | (1.6) | (4.2) | (2.0) | 122.16 | 164,972.2 | 11.9 | 1.4 | 4.5 |
| Dubai# | 3,419.00 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 3.5 | 2.5 | 56.58 | 161,144.0 | 9.2 | 1.2 | 3.1 |
| Abu Dhabi# | 9,858.87 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.5 | (3.4) | 338.51 | 663,663.0 | 23.1 | 3.3 | 2.1 |
| Saudi Arabia | 10,153.30 | (1.1) | (3.7) | (5.9) | (3.1) | 1,072.86 | 2,595,009.8 | 16.2 | 2.1 | 2.9 |
| Kuwait | 7,266.89 | (0.5) | (1.3) | (0.1) | (0.3) | 115.84 | 152,014.8 | 18.0 | 1.7 | 3.5 |
| Oman | 4,650.16 | 0.3 | (0.1) | (1.1) | (4.3) | 6.54 | 21,778.2 | 12.5 | 0.7 | 3.7 |
| Bahrain | 1,939.27 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 2.3 | 3.78 | 68,839.7 | 6.1 | 0.6 | 5.5 |

*Source: Bloomberg, Qatar Stock Exchange, Tadawul, Muscat Securities Market and Dubai Financial Market (** TTM; * Value traded ($ mn) do not include special trades, if any # Data as of February 24, 2023)*

## Qatar Market Commentary

- The QE Index declined 1.8% to close at 10,472.0. The Banks & Financial Services and Transportation indices led the losses. The index fell on the back of selling pressure from Qatari shareholders despite buying support from non-Qatari shareholders.
- Qatar Islamic Bank and QLM Life & Medical Insurance Co. were the top losers, falling 9.7% and 7.1%, respectively. Among the top gainers, Qatar Insurance Company gained 10.0%, while Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Co. was up 8.9%.
- Volume of shares traded on Thursday rose by 6.7% to 123.8mn from 116mn on Wednesday. However, as compared to the 30-day moving average of 136.5mn, volume for the day was 9.3% lower. Estithmar Holding and Masraf Al Rayan were the most active stocks, contributing 20.0% and 9.1% to the total volume, respectively.

| Overall Activity | Buy %* | Sell %* | Net (QR) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Qatari Individuals | 32.43% | 30.24% | 9,765,656.3 |
| Qatari Institutions | 27.87% | 35.00% | (31,788,372.2) |
| **Qatari** | **60.29%** | **65.24%** | **(22,022,715.9)** |
| GCC Individuals | 0.30% | 0.31% | (22,888.1) |
| GCC Institutions | 2.99% | 2.74% | 1,140,740.7 |
| **GCC** | **3.29%** | **3.04%** | **1,117,852.6** |
| Arab Individuals | 12.00% | 8.91% | 13,745,700.5 |
| Arab Institutions | 0.03% | 0.01% | 93,100.0 |
| **Arab** | **12.03%** | **8.92%** | **13,838,800.5** |
| Foreigners Individuals | 2.98% | 1.98% | 4,446,323.3 |
| Foreigners Institutions | 21.41% | 20.82% | 2,619,739.5 |
| **Foreigners** | **24.39%** | **22.80%** | **7,066,062.8** |

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

## Earnings Releases, Global Economic Data and Earnings Calendar

### Earnings Releases

| Company | Market | Currency | Revenue (mn) 4Q2022 | % Change YoY | Operating Profit (mn) 4Q2022 | % Change YoY | Net Profit (mn) 4Q2022 | % Change YoY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabian Cement Co | Saudi Arabia | SA | 970.90 | -6.0% | 193.4 | -0.9% | 181.0 | 12.1% |
| United International Transportation Co. | Saudi Arabia | SR | 1,025.16 | 3.7% | 268.3 | 16.6% | 252.0 | 14.6% |
| The Bahrain Ship Repairing and Engineering Company | Bahrain | BHD | 5.63 | 6.5% | NA | NA | 1.0 | -27.1% |

*Source: Company data: DFM, ADX, MSM, TASI, BHB. (#Values in Thousands, *Financial for 4Q2022)*

### Global Economic Data

| Date | Market | Source | Indicator | Period | Actual | Consensus | Previous |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 02-23 | US | Bureau of Economic Analysis | GDP Annualized QoQ | 4Q | 2.70% | 2.90% | 2.90% |
| 02-23 | US | Bureau of Economic Analysis | Personal Consumption | 4Q | 1.40% | 2.00% | 2.10% |
| 02-23 | US | Bureau of Economic Analysis | GDP Price Index | 4Q | 3.90% | 3.50% | 3.50% |
| 02-23 | US | Department of Labor | Initial Jobless Claims | Feb | 192k | 200k | 195k |
| 02-23 | US | Department of Labor | Continuing Claims | Feb | 1,654k | 1,700k | 1,691k |
| 02-24 | US | U.S. Census Bureau | New Home Sales | Jan | 670k | 620k | 625k |
| 02-24 | US | U.S. Census Bureau | New Home Sales MoM | Jan | 7.20% | 0.70% | 7.20% |
| 02-24 | UK | GFK NOP (UK) | GFK Consumer Confidence | Feb | -38.00 | -43.00 | -45.00 |
| 02-24 | Germany | German Federal Statistical Office | Private Consumption QoQ | 4Q | -1.00% | -0.60% | 0.70% |
| 02-24 | Germany | German Federal Statistical Office | Government Spending QoQ | 4Q | 0.60% | -0.40% | -1.20% |
| 02-24 | Germany | German Federal Statistical Office | Capital Investment QoQ | 4Q | -2.50% | -0.60% | 1.30% |
| 02-24 | Germany | German Federal Statistical Office | GDP SA QoQ | 4Q | -0.40% | -0.20% | -0.20% |
| 02-24 | Germany | German Federal Statistical Office | GDP NSA YoY | 4Q | 0.30% | 0.50% | 0.50% |
| 02-24 | Germany | German Federal Statistical Office | GDP WDA YoY | 4Q | 0.90% | 1.10% | 1.10% |
| 02-24 | Germany | GFK AG | GFK Consumer Confidence | Mar | -30.50 | -30.50 | -33.80 |
| 02-24 | Japan | Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications | Natl CPI YoY | Jan | 4.30% | 4.30% | 4.00% |

*Source: Bloomberg (s.a. = seasonally adjusted; n.s.a. = non-seasonally adjusted; w.d.a. = working day adjusted)*

### Earnings Calendar

| Tickers | Company Name | Date of reporting 4Q2022 results | No. of days remaining | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MCCS | Mannai Corporation | 26-Feb-23 | 0 | Due |
| QGRI | Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Company | 26-Feb-23 | 0 | Due |
| WDAM | Widam Food Company | 01-Mar-23 | 3 | Due |
| QETF | QE Index ETF | 06-Mar-23 | 8 | Due |
| DBIS | Dlala Brokerage & Investment Holding Company | 09-Mar-23 | 11 | Due |
| MERS | Al Meera Consumer Goods Company | 13-Mar-23 | 15 | Due |

*Source: QSE*

## Qatar

- **Qatar's 2022 budget records surplus of QR89bn -** Data from the Ministry of Finance showed today that the State of Qatar's budget for the fiscal year of 2022 saw a surplus of QR89bn, a 5462.5% increase compared to the surplus of 2021, which was less than QR1.6bn. The ministry said that the surplus for Q4 of 2022 (October to December) was QR11.6bn, compared to a deficit of QR3.3bn in the same quarter of 2021. Total revenues for the quarter came in at QR65.1bn, compared to QR51.5bn in the same period of last year. Oil and gas revenues were QR59.3bn, compared QR44.7bn in the corresponding period of 2021. Total expenditures for the quarter came at QR53.5bn, compared to QR54.8bn in Q4 of 2021. Wages were QR15.4bn, compared to QR 15bn in the same period of last year. Current expenditures were QR19.3bn for the quarter, compared to QR16.1bn in the same quarter of the previous year. Minor capital expenditure were QR1.4bn, compared to QR1.1bn in Q4 of 2021. Expenditures tied to major projects were QR17.4bn in 2022, compared to QR22.6bn in the same period of 2021. Estimates when the 2022 budget was first approved were of a deficit of QR8.3bn. HE Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari said at the time that they were a result of the expenses related to hosting the World Cup, including security and all events accompanying the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. 2022's large surplus brings to mind similar high levels achieved in 2012 (QR77bn), 2013 (QR106.3bn), and 2014 (QR 108.6bn), mainly due to the control over expenditures and the rise in revenues as oil prices recovered. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Estithmar Holding announces the signing of an agreement with Al Koot Insurance and Reinsurance Company as a strategic partner for "The View" Hospital -** Estithmar Holding announces the signing of an agreement with Al Koot Insurance and Reinsurance Company as a strategic partner for "The View" Hospital in affiliation with Cedars Sinai, in the field of providing health care insurance. According to this agreement, Al Koot's customer base of citizens and residents in Qatar will have direct access to all medical services provided by "The View" Hospital through the company's direct payment feature. (QSE)
- **Amendment on FTSE Russell Global Equity Index Series: March 2023 Semi-Annual Review -** FTSE Russell announced on 22 February 2023 an amendment to the Semi-annual Index review published on 17 February 2023 ( published on QSE website on 19 Feb. 2023) saying that IGRD won't be added to FTSE Global Equity Index Series Small Cap Index but only deleted from FTSE Global Equity Index Series Micro Cap Index. (QSE)
- **Qatar Insurance Company through its Oman subsidiary, Oman Qatar Insurance SAOG (OQIC) completed the acquisition of Vision Insurance SAOG -** Qatar Insurance Group (QIC) through its Oman subsidiary, Oman Qatar Insurance SAOG (OQIC) recently completed the acquisition of a leading Omani national insurer- Vision Insurance SAOG. The acquisition is part of QIC's strategy to expand its presence in the direct insurance market of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Maghreb. Acquisition expands QIC's Footprint Oman QIC has been operating in the Omani market for over a decade and is a subsidiary of the Doha headquartered Qatar Insurance Group (QIC), a market leader in the wider MENA region and holds more than 50 percent stake in OQIC. The acquisition brings about a unified company that leverages a greater market share in the Sultanate and provides the optimum framework for continuous profitable development while offering an affordable, customer-centric and digital-first insurance experience. Speaking on the acquisition, QIC Group CEO, Salem Al Mannai, said, "Within the context of Oman's political, social, and economic stability, good governance and favorable outlook for a growing insurance sector, this acquisition is a key growth opportunity for OQIC and in turn expands QIC's footprint in the profitable direct-line insurance market within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). More broadly, the acquisition reflects OQIC's alignment with national goals set out in The Oman Vision 2040, which foresees an empowered private sector driving a national economy that is competitive and aligned with the global economy". Following the acquisition, the authorized capital of the company will be increased from OMR 20 million to OMR 30 million and the issued capital from OMR 10 million to around OMR 22 million. Qatar Insurance Company Q.S.P.C. (QIC) is a publicly listed composite insurer with a consistent performance history of over 50 years and a global underwriting footprint. Founded in 1964, QIC was the first domestic insurance company in the State of Qatar. Today, QIC is the market leader in Qatar and a dominant insurer in the GCC and MENA regions. QIC is also one of the largest insurance companies in the MENA region in terms of gross written premium and total assets. It is listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange and has a market capitalization in excess of QAR 5.5 billion. QIC was crowned as the best online insurance company in the Middle East at the Global Banking & Finance Review Awards 2022. (QSE)
- **Dlala Brokerage and investment Company to disclose its annual result on March 09 -** Dlala Brokerage and investment Company discloses its financial statement for the period ending 31st December 2022 on 09/03/2023. (QSE)
- **Hamad Port crosses 8mn container throughput mark since becoming operational -** Hamad Port has crossed the 8mn container throughput milestone since the start of operations in December 2016, indicating the growing importance of Qatar in the regional and international maritime space. "This significant achievement reinforces the confidence the shipping lines have in Hamad Port's facilities and QTerminals' safe services, competency and performance," the terminal operating company said in a tweet. The achievement of the 8mn TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) mark will further encourage shipping lines to add Hamad Port in the rotation of their mainline services calling the Middle East region and use it as one of the regional transshipment hubs, according to QTerminals. In 2022, Mwani Qatar continued its efforts to transform the country into a vibrant regional trade hub by strengthening the role of Hamad Port as a pivotal gateway for transshipment in the region. Hamad Port's strategic geographical location offers opportunities to create cargo movement towards the upper Gulf, supporting countries such as Kuwait and Iraq and south towards Oman. Its total shipping lines network has reached 28, offering direct and indirect services to over 100 destinations around world. The new services provide additional opportunities for direct trade between Qatar and the world, cementing the port's role towards achieving the goals aimed at transforming Qatar into a vibrant regional trade hub, Mwani Qatar had said, adding it would also provide regular service, faster and cost-effective transit. QTerminals, which bagged the "Best Container Terminal Operator" and "Best Port Infrastructure Development Company" for the year 2022 by International Finance Magazine, in December saw the commencement of the weekly India to East MED (Mediterranean) service. The year also saw the commencement of the Gulf-Pakistan Express (GPX) service, Gulf-India Express 2 (GIX2), a fortnightly service connecting Hamad Port with Singapore. A report from KPMG had earlier said container penetration in the Gulf Co-operation Council or GCC countries is more than six times that of the world average and significantly higher than that of major developed nations in the west. The development of port-linked free trade zones has contributed to the success of the sector in the region, it said, adding the GCC port operators have continued to invest in infrastructure, expansion, and technology, increasing throughput capacity. Umm Alhoul Free Zone, which is located directly beside Hamad Port, was established for sectors as maritime industries, heavy manufacturing, the emerging technologies and logistics hub. (Gulf Times)
- **Qatar makes strong progress on FATF technical compliance -** Financial Action Task Force (FATF) discussed its report related to the State of Qatar's system for combating money laundering, combatting the financing of terrorism and the financing of armament. The meeting concluded that the State of Qatar carried out a number of improvements to its system combatting money laundering and terrorism financing. It added that the State of Qatar's commitment to financial standards in the field are very strong, as the Qatari system achieved full marks in terms of implementing all 40 recommendations. The Financial Action Task Force also indicated that the State of Qatar has taken strong positive steps to develop national understanding of the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing, confiscation of criminal assets, supervision of the financial and non-financial sector, and the implementation of targeted financial sanctions related to terrorist financing. The meeting concluded that the State of Qatar needs to continue strengthening the system Control in some areas, and the Financial Action Task Force will publish the report of the State of Qatar by next May. HE Governor of Qatar Central

Bank Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud Al-Thani highlighted, in a speech during the meeting, the great efforts made by the State of Qatar in the field. These efforts included updating the anti-money laundering and terrorist financing law, and its associated rules and regulations to ensure the necessary effectiveness and to enhance compliance with FATF standards, in addition to strengthening the Anti-Terrorism Law to allow the full implementation of targeted financial sanctions. His Excellency stressed that the State of Qatar has, in the past 10 years, undertaken strategic and organizational reforms to strengthen the framework for combatting money laundering and financing of terrorism in accordance with FATF standards and international best practices, pointing to the need for more diligent and continuous work to keep pace with emerging challenges in this regard, stressing that the State of Qatar continues to strengthen its national systems and capabilities in this regard. His Excellency also stressed that Qatar was not satisfied with these efforts, but rather continued to work closely with international partners to combat cross-border financial crime, noting that the matter was not limited to giving priority to bilateral and multilateral cooperation and contacts, but also focused on regional efforts, building capabilities in this field. HE the Governor of the Qatar Central Bank reaffirmed the State of Qatar's permanent commitment to combatting money laundering, financing terrorism and financing proliferation. (Gulf Times)

- **Qatar seen 'well positioned' to leverage expertise in sporting event management -** Qatar is well positioned to leverage its expertise in sporting event management, PwC said in its 'Qatar Economy Watch' report. Although the World Cup was by far the biggest event that Qatar has hosted, the country already has substantial experience including the Asian Games in 2006 and the first F1 Qatar Grand Prix in 2021, which is becoming an annual event. Other established annual events include the ExxonMobil Qatar Open Tennis Tournament, Qatar Masters Golf Tournament and the Qatar MotoGP Grand Prix. More mega-events will follow, including the 2023 AFC Asian Cup, the 2024 World Aquatics and the 2030 Asian Games. Qatar has also bid in the past to host the Olympics and is reconsidering it for 2036, with a successful FIFA World Cup under its belt. Qatar's planning for the FIFA World Cup focused heavily on developing a long-lasting legacy, PwC noted. Stadium 974, for example, is based on a modular design that features stacks of shipping containers and the plan is to donate it to support sports in another country. Other stadiums such as Al Bayt, Ahmed Bin Ali, Al Janoub and Al Thumama will be reconfigured to reduce their capacities to between 20,000 and 25,000 seats, in line with domestic needs, freeing up around 170,000 seats to be donated. The infrastructure that has been built, including these stadia will be used to host future mega events. Meanwhile, Lusail Stadium will be reconfigured into a community space for schools and will house a number of sports facilities, health clinics and shops. "While Qatar will continue to focus on sports as a national priority and a core pillar of the country's global brand, it should explore the potential of hosting global nonsporting mega-events such as music festivals, political and economic summits, and global expositions to encourage tourism and utilize its world-class facilities," PwC said. Existing events such as the Doha Forum and the Geneva Motor Show serve as great examples for Qatar to continue to build on. In preparation for the FIFA World Cup, Qatar made significant leaps towards improving its transportation infrastructure. This included the development of the three-line, 37-stop Metro along with light rail networks in Msheireb, Lusail and Education City in line with the country's commitment to sustainability. Looking ahead, the report noted, there are plans announced to build an additional Metro line and several new stations by 2026, as well as three additional lines for the Lusail Tram. (Gulf Times)
- **FIFA World Cup 2022 bolsters residential market in Qatar -** The residential sector in the country witnessed a huge boom during the fourth quarter of 2022 mainly due to the mega tournament hosted in November and December. The demand for housing properties spiked last year in addition to the supplements of hotel accommodation, the rents in Qatar witnessed a steady growth during and after the World Cup. According to a report by a global commercial real estate company, Cushman and Wakefield, "Qatar's residential real estate experienced unprecedented market dynamics in 2022, due to the hosting of the FIFA World Cup and the substantial but temporary requirement for housing units to accommodate visitors during the months of November and December." Apartments across the country witnessed a significant increase of 15% to 30% for annual rental contracts and have not declined post-World Cup. The report states that the compound villa sector has been taking advantage of the high occupancy rates for several years while the rents skyrocketed by 3% to 8% during the first three quarters of 2022. It said: "By October, with the accommodation requirements of tourists largely catered for, an increasing number of apartments and villas were made available to residents once again, which saw the upward pressure on rents ease." Many villas and apartments in the country have unchanged rents in 2023, even though the rents were expected to decline after the World Cup. Luxurious one-bedroom semi-furnished apartments at The Pearl Qatar were leasing out between QR11,000 ($3,021) and QR12,000 ($3,295), while two-bedroom apartments were being rented between QR14,000 ($3,845) and QR15,500 ($4,257). Rental apartments in Lusail City witnessed a leasing range of QR8,000 ($2,197) to QR10,000 ($2,746) per month. In its latest report, the realty firm mentioned that there were nearly 35,000 residential units as 'fan accommodations built-in for the football tournament. The report added that "Many of these units are held on government 'Eskan' leases of up to 5 years with rolling break options." Along with this, the supply of residential units is anticipated to increase rapidly with newer projects and developments taking place in key cities including Al Wakrah and Lusail in the years ahead. The report elucidates that the rental prices will come down despite the outrages shown by residents on social media platforms regarding the rising rents. "Residential rents are expected to start falling in 2023. However, it is likely to be in the second or third quarters of the year before any significant falls from 2022 levels become evident," it outlined. As compared to 2021, the number of residential sales transactions fell by 25.5% in 2022, recent data from Planning and Statistics Authority (PSA) showed. The report highlighted that the PSA's statistics "Indicate that the pace of residential property sales has slowed since an initial surge in activity following the introduction of Law No.16 of 2018, which saw non-Qataris take advantage of the changes to ownership laws in areas such as Lusail." It added: "Q4 figures reflected a 16% year-on-year fall. However, an overall increase in transaction value of 16.6% indicates that there has been an increase in the number of higher-value residential properties being transacted in recent months." (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Qatar's office market continues to expand -** Demand for office supplies in Qatar increased during the last quarter of 2022 largely with private sectors as new developments were implemented across the country. A number of new entrants were witnessed in the market last year and have been triggered by rental expiries or tenant break options in Qatar, Cushman and Wakefield's report mentions. The realty fact-checker and housing services firm states that "The fall in office rents over the past five years has spurred companies in Qatar to seek alter-native accommodation, which is now available at lower rents – or renegotiate the terms of expiring leases at substantially lower rents than were committed to between 2015 and 2020." A notable increase in the tenants seeking larger office units in the region has capacitated larger office rooms that were available. "The recent expansion in the hydrocarbon sector has been behind a recent office acquisition of more than 7,000 sq m and two further lettings in excess of 3,000 sq m in H2," the report noted. Last year, many government and semi-government entities announced their decision to relocate their offices to buildings that were under construction in Lusail City. On one hand, when this eventually led to many vacant supplies, on the other, demand for office spaces in Lusail grew substantially. In Qatar, numerous organizations including Qatar Free Zone Authority (QFZ) and Qatar Financial Center (QFC) constantly improve the demand for office supplies in the private sector, the report said. "QFZA-designated office accommodation will soon be available to lease to QFZA companies outside of Ras Bufontas, as office buildings within that Free Zone are reaching capacity. An agreement is also in place for QFZA-registered companies to occupy offices in Msheireb Downtown to accommodate growing demand from an organization with more than 300 registered companies," it said. The report further added that "QFC currently has more than 60 designated buildings across Doha housing the 1,400 QFC registered companies. This number is also expected to grow over the coming years." The report also outlined that "Grade A stock is now typically available to lease from between QAR 100 to QAR 120 per sqm per month exclusive of service

charges. Office spaces leased as 'shell and core' can be secured for QAR 60 per sq m per month in some of Doha's main office districts." Purpose-built offices in the country have now reached about 5.3mn sq m. Business districts including Al Dafna and West Bay in Qatar's capital city Doha are regarded to have the highest supplies of nearly 1.8mn sq m of gross leasable area and other cities including Lusail's office supplies have expanded to be over 800,000 sq m. (Peninsula Qatar)

- **Doha Jewelry, Watches Exhibition ends on glittering note -** The 19th edition of the Doha Jewelry and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) concluded at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC) on a glittering note drawing large number of visitors from across the region making it one of the most look forward to events in Qatar's annual social calendar. This year's edition sup-ported by the Qatar National Bank (QNB) as the official sponsor and Qatar Airways as the official airline partner comprised exquisite craftsmanship of over 500 globally admired jewelry and watch brands. Spanning over 33,000 m2, the most prominent jewelers from Qatar and the world exhibited new brands, limited edition collections and extraordinary showpieces. Visitors to the region's largest business-to-customer show had the rare opportunity to see the debut of regional giant Damas Jewelry who showcased their mesmerizing Alif collection, a selection of exceptional high-end pieces and unique jewelry creations. Ameen Hussain, a visitor at this year's event said the DJWE has always been on top of his agenda and added that it was a treat to see some of the unique jewelry designs and craftsmanship. For the first time in DJWE Louis Vuitton showcased their "Fantasy necklace," a must-see 2.56-carat Monogram flower-cut diamond. Phillips, a leading global platform for buying and selling 20th and 21st-century art and design was present at this year's DJWE. Phillips, in association with Bacs & Russo, holds the world record for the most successful watch auctions. The presence of Noora al Ansari, a renowned Qatari businesswoman at this year's edition sparkled the show pitting herself against giants of the industry. The DJWE, one of the longest-running events saw the return of Qatar Tourism's Qatari Designers initiative, a long-running platform demonstrating Qatar Tourism's ongoing commitment to nurturing local, creative talent. Established in 2017, the initiative has historically provided some of the country's most recognized contemporary jewelry and watch brands with a springboard to help elevate their developing businesses. (Peninsula Qatar)
- **Al-Baker: FIFA World Cup 2022 a fillip to Qatar tourism -** Doha has experienced an unprecedented boost in tourism with the hosting of the FIFA World Cup for the first time in the region in 2022, Qatar Tourism Chairman and Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive HE Akbar al-Baker said Saturday during an official ceremony recognizing Doha as the Arab Tourism Capital for 2023. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz al-Thani attended the official announcement ceremony of 'Doha, Arab Tourism Capital 2023' by the Arab Tourism Organization (ATO), coinciding with the Arab Tourism Day. He also attended the ceremony in which the Arab Tourism Capital's key was handed over to HE al-Baker from the ATO, the official Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported. The ceremony included the screening of a film about the Arab Tourism Organization, in addition to Qatari folklore performances, music and fireworks. It was attended by a lineup of sheikhs, ministers from sisterly countries and ambassadors accredited to Qatar along with senior officials and guests, QNA added. ATO president Dr Bandar bin Fahd al-Fuhaid was also present. HE al-Baker expressed appreciation for Doha being granted the prestigious title by the Arab Tourism Organization, recognizing the serious efforts exerted by the country to develop and upgrade the country's tourism sector. He stressed that Qatar was highly successful in organizing the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, which was rightly described as the greatest in the century. He pointed out that Qatar enjoys all the potentials and capabilities of being an excellent destination for family-friendly tourism, and comes with the warm, authentic Arabian hospitality. HE al-Baker said the successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup's has changed the world's perception not only of Doha and Qatar but also of the entire Arab world, reflecting the true, positive image of this part of the world and paving the way for an enhanced tourism industry. He noted that Qatar has all the qualities to be a global hub for tourism, with Qatar Airways being named 'Airline of the Year' by the international air transport rating organization, Skytrax, for an unprecedented seven times, and Hamad International Airport recognized as the 'Best Airport in the World 2022' for the second year in a row by the Skytrax Airport Awards. Besides, Qatar and Doha consistently rank among the safest places in the world. He stressed that the country has invested heavily in the infrastructure necessary to make tourists enjoy a convenient stay, such as the Doha Metro, safe and affordable taxis and other means of transport, world-class hotels and tourist facilities that blend heritage with sophisticated and modern luxury, in addition to various sites and attractions around the country. HE al-Baker noted that the country is set to continue investing in this key sector to realize Qatar National Vision 2030, and cement Doha's position as the most desired tourist destination. Meanwhile, Dr al-Fuhaid stressed that the choice of Doha as the Capital of Arab Tourism 2023 is rightly deserved and it enjoys sophisticated infrastructure and facilities that are considered the pride of all Arabs. He said the success of Doha in hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 drew the attention of the world, making the entire Arab world proud of Doha. He also pointed out that the tourism sector in the Arab world enjoys an increasing interest and huge investments have been made in this sector, estimated to amount to $320bn, and the targeted number of tourists by 2030 is 350mn tourists. He further talked about the challenges and opportunities in the sector and the efforts of the ATO in promoting and developing the industry in the Arab world. Accordingly, he thanked Qatar for the great reception and generous hospitality. Accordingly, Dr al-Fuhaid hand over the Arab Tourism Capital's key for 2023 to HE al-Baker to officially made such a declaration. (Gulf Times)
- **Minister: 'Qatar moves ahead in sustainable development initiatives -** HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Sheikh Dr Faleh bin Nasser bin Ahmed bin Ali al-Thani underlined Saturday the need to achieve a balance between environmental, economic, social, and human development to ensure a sustainable future for Qatar. Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA) on the sidelines of celebrating Qatar Environment Day 2023 on Al Aaliya Island under the slogan 'Our Earth Our Legacy', HE the Minister said that the celebration confirms the ministry's vision and strategy to protect the local environment and achieving sustainable development, especially as the local environment is part of the historical heritage of Qatar, and is a major component of the culture of the Qatari people. He explained that the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change marks the Environment Day through many activities, including releasing sea turtles and young fish, cleaning Al Aaliya Island, cleaning the seabed, planting mangrove seedlings, and setting up nests for birds on the island, which is characterized by its nature and biodiversity. He pointed out that Qatar has achieved leadership in sustainable development and preservation of the national environment, through many achievements and initiatives that have made it at the forefront of countries that strive to preserve the environment in all its forms and abide by its international commitments in this field. He pointed out that Qatar has made great strides in reducing carbon emissions in all sectors of the country, relying on environmentally friendly alternatives and issuing legislation on preserving the national environment and encourages the private sector to find a balanced relationship between "development needs" and "environmental protection", in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030. He noted that Qatar has succeeded in hosting the first eco-friendly FIFA World Cup edition by building 40% of the stadiums with recyclable materials and relying on solar energy to operate them, noting that all means of transportation were powered by electricity. He pointed out that the ministry had deployed a large number of air quality units around the championship stadiums. Regarding the ministry's achievements in 2022, HE the Minister pointed out that it has established a national network for the continuous monitoring system for the quality of coastal and marine waters of the country, by measuring marine and environmental physical variables and factors, in addition to providing data to the concerned authorities, and giving early warning in a case of deterioration. (Gulf Times)
- **Manchester United Bidders Urged to Increase Offers -** Bidders for Manchester United will have to raise their offers if they intend to acquire the team, according to the Financial Times. The bids from Qatari Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani and British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe to acquire Manchester United are not high enough for the Glazer family to sell the club, the Financial Times reports, citing a person close to the situation.

The Glazers also got a number of proposals from other potential suitors. They include several minority investment proposals that would allow them to raise capital at a more attractive price and retain control of the club, the Financial Times said, citing the person. None have come forward publicly. Bidders had agreed to non-disclosure agreements, the media outlet said, citing three people with knowledge of the situation. Bidders were asked to meet an informal deadline for proposals last week and could be given access to additional financial information as soon as next week, the Financial Times said. (Bloomberg)

## *International*

- **US consumer spending posts biggest gain in nearly two years; inflation picks up -** US consumer spending increased by the most in nearly two years in January amid a surge in wage gains, while inflation accelerated, adding to financial market fears that the Federal Reserve could continue raising interest rates into summer. The report from the Commerce Department on Friday was the latest indication that the economy was nowhere near a much-dreaded recession. It joined data earlier this month showing robust job growth in January and the lowest unemployment rate in more than 53 years. "Clearly, tighter monetary policy has yet to fully impact consumers and shows that the Fed has more work to do in slowing down aggregate demand," said Jeffrey Roach, chief economist at LPL Financial in Charlotte, North Carolina. "This report all but ensures Fed will continue on its rate hiking campaign for a lot longer than markets anticipated just a few weeks ago." Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, shot up 1.8% last month. That was the largest increase since March 2021. Data for December was revised higher to show spending dipping 0.1% instead of falling 0.2% as previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast consumer spending rebounding 1.3%.When adjusted for inflation, consumer spending increased 1.1%, also the biggest gain since March 2021. The so-called real consumer spending had declined in November and December. Consumers boosted purchases of long-lasting manufactured goods like motor vehicles, household furnishings and equipment as well as recreational goods and vehicles. They also bought clothes. Goods outlays rebounded 2.8%. Spending on services was also strong, rising 1.3% as Americans frequented restaurants and bars. There were increases in spending on healthcare, recreation and transportation services. The overall surge in spending came as wages and salaries jumped 0.9%. An 8.7% cost of living adjustment, the biggest increase since 1981, for more than 65mn Social Security beneficiaries offset a drop in government social benefits. That reflected the expiration of the extended child tax credit. Spending was also likely flattered by difficulties ironing out seasonal fluctuations from the data at the start of the year. Some economists expect payback in February. Nevertheless, the strong performance put consumer spending on a higher growth path at the start of the first quarter. Consumer spending slowed in the fourth quarter, with most of the loss in momentum happening in the last two months of 2022. (Reuters)
- **US new home sales jump to 10 month high in January, prices fall -** Sales of new US single-family homes jumped to a 10-month high in January as prices declined, but a resurgence in mortgage rates could slow a much anticipated housing market turnaround. New home sales increased 7.2% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 670,000 units last month, the highest level since March 2022, the Commerce Department said on Friday. December's sales pace was revised higher to 625,000 units from the previously reported 616,000. New home sales are counted at the signing of a contract and are considered a leading housing market indicator. On a regional basis, sales surged in the South but slumped in the Midwest, Northeast and West. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast new home sales, which account for a small share of US home sales, would increase to a rate of 620,000 units. Sales declined 19.4% on a year-on-year basis in January. The housing market has been the biggest casualty of the Federal Reserve's aggressive interest rate hikes. Residential investment has contracted for seven straight quarters, the longest such stretch since 2009. There are signs the worst of the housing market rout is likely over. Sales of previously owned homes fell modestly in January, while confidence among single-family homebuilders rose to a five-month high in February, though it was still depressed. But a turnaround in the housing market is probably still far off. Mortgage rates have resumed their upward trend after robust retail sales and labor market data as well as strong monthly inflation readings raised the prospect of the US central bank hiking interest rates into the summer. The 30-year fixed mortgage rate increased to an average of 6.50% this week from 6.32% in the prior week, according to data from mortgage finance agency Freddie Mac. The third straight weekly increase lifted the rate to a three-month high. The median new house price in January was $427,500, a 0.7% drop from a year ago. There were 439,000 new homes on the market at the end of last month, down from 452,000 in December. At January's sales pace it would take 7.9 months to clear the supply of houses on the market, down from 8.7 months in December. (Reuters)
- **ELFA: US business equipment borrowings grow 6% in January -** US companies borrowed 6% more in January to finance equipment investments from a year earlier, industry body Equipment Leasing and Finance Association (ELFA) said on Friday. "Business demand for equipment financing continues unabated despite uncertain and conflicting economic signals — inflationary pressures, rising interest rates, a hot labor market and easing supply chain disruptions," said ELFA Chief Executive Ralph Petta. Companies had signed up for new loans, leases and lines of credit worth $8.8bn last month, compared with $8.3bn a year earlier. New business volume, however, was down 32% month-on-month after the typical end-of-quarter, end-of-year spike in new business activity. ELFA, which reports economic activity for the $1tn equipment finance sector, said credit approvals were 75.1%, down from 76.6% in December. Washington-based ELFA's leasing, and finance index measures the volume of commercial equipment financed in the United States. (Reuters)
- **GFK: German consumer sentiment consolidates upward trajectory -** German consumer sentiment is set to improve for a fifth consecutive month in March as energy prices fall, a GfK institute survey showed on Friday. The institute forecast its consumer sentiment index to improve to -30.5 heading into March, up from a revised reading of -33.8 in February, but slightly weaker than an average forecast of -30.4 in a Reuters poll of analysts. "Recent drops in energy prices and reports that experts believe a recession in Germany this year can now be avoided mean that optimism is slowly returning," said GfK consumer expert Rolf Buerkl. Nevertheless, he warned that the still very low level of the indicator meant that private consumption would not be able to positively contribute to overall economic development in Germany this year. Among the three sub-indices for the current month that serve as a basis for the forecast, income expectations and the economic outlook both continued their upward trend. Willingness to buy continued its rollercoaster of the last few months, picking up again in February after a drop in January. (Reuters)

## *Regional*

- **Inflation remains low in GCC region -** The year 2022 was a turbulent year for the global economy with runaway inflation and the cost-of-living crisis being dominant issues facing the bulk of the countries globally according to the GCC Inflation Update by Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse headquartered in Kuwait. The GCC economies were no exception that faced the challenges of higher prices that worsened due to excessive reliance on imported products, the report noted. However, it also noted that proactive policies adopted by the governments in the region and subsidies on food and energy items had helped to keep inflation in the region at relatively low levels. Inflation in the GCC averaged at around the 4% mark and showed a downward trend for most countries during 2H-2022, according to the report. Global energy prices sky-rocketed during 2022 mainly driven by the Russia-Ukraine conflict as Russia's energy exports were sanctioned. The EU countries, Russia's biggest natural gas and oil export destination, started to diversify and look elsewhere for energy imports to curtail Russia's ability to wage war, the report stated. The sanctioning of Russia's energy exports created a supply drop in global energy markets hence pushing oil and natural gas prices up. The Russia-Ukraine conflict also created a negative sentiment in energy markets as the war nears its one-year anniversary. In 2022, European natural gas prices reached record highs. The Dutch TTF natural gas future prices touched EUR 340/MWh in August-2022, the highest levels ever recorded, while the US oil prices spiked to 13-year high of over $130 per barrel during March-2022, the report stated. Russia and Ukraine are key producers of global foodstuffs. Between them the two countries export nearly one third of the world's wheat exports and barley and over 70% of its sunflower. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has prevented export of foodgrains from those countries from leaving their shores causing worldwide price increases in food as well as other repercussions such as fear of food shortages, inflation, and political instability. Inflation reached a peak of 9.1% in June-2022 in the US and has mostly trended downwards thereafter. Inflationary pressure is also expected to ease in the near term. According to the IMF, nearly 84% of the countries in the world are forecasted to have lower consumer price index inflation growth in 2023 than in 2022 when inflation reached the highest level in decades. In terms of global inflation growth, the IMF forecasted in its latest World Economic Report, that global headline inflation would fall from an annual average of 8.8% in 2022 to 6.6% in 2023 and further to 4.3% in 2024. The IMF attributed its lower inflation projection declining international fuel and nonfuel commodity prices due to weaker global demand. Efforts to control inflation via tighter monetary policies, including higher interest rates, are expected to continue in 2023. After raising rate by 25 bps in 2023, the US Fed is expected to undertake further rate hikes as indicated in their statement as well as probability surveys from Bloomberg that shows at least two more rate hikes of 25 bps this year. (Peninsula Qatar)

- **Report: GCC real estate on solid trajectory, upbeat on H1 -** Buoyed by strong macroeconomic fundamentals, the real estate sector in GCC economies is on a solid trajectory to witness acceleration in the first half of the year, according to the 'Real Estate H1 2023 Outlook' reports for Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, issued recently by the Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz). Prepared by Marmore Mena Intelligence, the research arm of Markaz, and based on the 'Markaz Real Estate Macro Index', which is designed to help investors in identifying the current state of real estate market using a list of economic indicators. For each of the qualitative score, a quantitative score was assigned with 'Strong' being assigned a top score of '5' and 'Poor' assigned a value of '1'. A weighted average score is computed based on the Macro-Economic factors. Markaz's annual real estate reports cover macroeconomic and microeconomic activity and provide data-driven insights and figures that measure the status of the industry across key GCC markets into 2023. Markaz's Real Estate Report 2023 Outlook's assessment of the real estate market in Kuwait stated that it would moderately accelerate in H1 2023 as indicated by 'Markaz Real Estate Macro Index' score of 3.6 out of 5.0, while Saudi Arabia will reach a score of 3.5, and the UAE is expected to score 3.7. Kuwait Real Estate Report On its outlook for Kuwait, Markaz cautioned that its real oil GDP growth rate was expected to be a measly 2% in 2023, lower than 12.4% last year owing to production cuts mandated by Opec+ and expected decline in demand for oil on fears of a global recession. Non-oil economic activity is expected to grow at 3.4% in 2023, it stated. The report also highlighted that with global supply chain disruptions easing, Kuwait's inflation had begun to slow down. Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate was 3.27% as of October 2022 in comparison with 4.71% in April 2022. Food and beverage, an important component of inflation due to Kuwait's high reliability on imports has softened to 6.63% as of October 2022 compared to the highs of 9.13% in April. The report also stated that overall credit growth has increased to 11.7% in Q3 2022 on y/y basis as compared to 4% in Q3 2021 on y/y basis. However, rise in interest rates and global recessionary pressures could be a headwind for the lending sector. According to Markaz, the sales in the real estate sector were stable in Q3 2022 supported by the commercial and investment sectors compensating the decline in the private housing segment. Commercial sector sales were at KD124mn (+241.6% y/y) and investment sector was at KD253mn (+7.2% y/y). Residential sector registered sales of KD443mn (-46.4% y/y). In its conclusion, Markaz said the real estate market in Kuwait will moderately accelerate in H1 2023 as indicated by Macro Index score of 3.6 out of 5. On the Saudi market, Markaz said its economic growth momentum was expected to slow down this year compared to 2022, amid expected softening in oil prices and lower production in line with Opec+ cuts. In Q3 2022, Saudi Arabia had registered real GDP growth of 8.6% y/y, mainly supported by rise in oil production. Non-oil economic activity is showing growth and is expected to be positive in 2023. Furthermore, Markaz said oil prices are expected to average below $100/bbl in 2023 amid sober global economic outlook. As per the preliminary budget, Saudi government had increased spending and expects to post a surplus. The country has also reported a budget surplus of SR149.6bn ($40bn) in the first nine months of 2022. According to Markaz, the value of real estate transactions in Saudi Arabia from January-September 2022 had surged to SR172.5bn, thus marking an increase of 12.2% y/y. The KSA real estate price index, covering price movements across residential, commercial and agricultural segments rose by 1.5% in Q3 2022, mainly driven by a 2.6% y/y increase in residential land prices. Real estate prices, as indicated by the price index, have been relatively stable in the recent past, showing mild growth, it stated. Markaz's report also showed that the Saudi Arabian real estate market has been broadly positive, supported by favorable economic conditions and government initiatives. However; rising interest, sober global economic outlook poses some headwinds. Based on Markaz's assessment of various macroeconomic factors, it believes that the real estate sector in Saudi Arabia is expected to continue its recovery with a moderate chance of acceleration in 2023. On the UAE market, Markaz said its economy was expected to witness robust growth in 2023 and record a GDP growth of 4.2% over the same period as projected by IMF mainly supported by steady oil prices, strong performance in the non-oil sector and progressive regulations promoting foreign investor participation. The report also indicated that the country's real estate sector had a positive year in 2022, witnessing a rise in rentals and property prices. For the January to September period, average property prices and rents increased by 8.9% and 26.6% respectively in Dubai. Transaction value in the first nine months of 2022 in Dubai touched record high levels and has already surpassed the volume witnessed in full year 2021. Despite weakening global macroeconomic environment, Markaz's report stated that the UAE is relatively on a stronger footing, supported by strong oil prices and supportive measures to develop the non-oil economy. Based on Markaz's assessment of various macroeconomic factors, the real estate sector in UAE is expected to accelerate in the first half, it added. (Zawya)

- **Saudi inflation rises to 2.7% in July on higher food prices -** Saudi Arabia's consumer price index rose 2.7% in July from a year earlier, government data showed on Monday, increasing from a 2.3% pace in June. The food and beverages segment rose 3.9%, mainly due to higher food prices and meat prices in particular, which rose as much as 5.1%, the General Authority for Statistics said in a statement. "Food and beverages prices were the main driver of the inflation rate in July 2022 due to their high relative importance in the Saudi consumer basket (with a weight of 18.8%)," it said. The Saudi CPI rose 0.5% in July from June, the month-on-month data showed. Saudi inflation is now at or close to a peak and will gradually fall back over the rest of this year and next, said Jason Tuvey, senior emerging markets economist at Capital Economics in London. "Looking ahead, we think that headline inflation is now probably at or very close to a peak. Food inflation should continue to drop back and the government's cap on local fuel prices will help to contain energy inflation," Tuvey said in a report to clients. (Reuters)

- **Saudi Arabia's merchandise exports up 1.1% in December 2022 -** The Saudi merchandise exports rose by 1.10% YoY in December 2022 to SAR 108.20bn from SAR 107bn, based on data from the General Authority for Statistics (GaStat). The growth was mainly backed by an annual increase of SAR 8.50bn (11.10%) in oil exports to SAR 85.50bn last December when compared with SAR 77bn. Meanwhile, the share of oil exports in total exports levelled up to 79% in December 2022 from 71.90% during the same month a year earlier. Month-on-month (MoM), December's total merchandise exports retreated by SAR 4.60bn (4%) when compared with November 2022. Non-oil exports decreased by 24.40% YoY in December 2022 to SAR 22.70bn from SAR 30.10bn, while they edged down by SAR 400,000 (0.20%) MoM when compared to November. The value of merchandise imports also increased by SAR 9bn (16.90%) YoY in December 2022 to SAR 62.20bn from SAR 53.20bn, whereas they witnessed a monthly drop of SAR 2.40bn (3.70%). The ratio of non-oil exports to imports plunged to 36.50% in December 2022 from 56.50% in the same month a year earlier, driven by a 24.40% decline in non-oil exports and a 16.90% rise in imports. Meanwhile, China was the top importer of Saudi exports with SAR 16.20bn, followed by Japan and India with SAR 12.60bn and SAR 11.30bn, respectively. In the first half (H1) of 2022, Saudi Arabia's trade balance surplus exceeded SAR 467.20bn, an annual leap of 191.30% from SAR 160.39bn. (Zawya)

- **Collective Retreats in deal with Neom to open GenNext tourism hub -** Leading outdoor experiential hospitality company Collective Retreats has reached an agreement with Neom, the developer of the mega futuristic city in Saudi Arabia, to open a next-generation, ultra-sustainable retreat in Trojena, the snow-capped mountain destination located in the kingdom's northwestern region. The retreat will feature approximately 60 open-air guest rooms and innovative meeting space concepts as well as dramatic water features, communal campfires and inspired culinary experiences, evoking the intrepid spirit of the Collective Retreats brand while showcasing a masterstroke blend of natural and developed landscapes. Slated for launch in the start of 2026, Collective Trojena will re-imagine the outdoor hospitality experience – offering guests unprecedented access to discover and explore the region’s spectacular and incomparable beauty located 50km from the Gulf of Aqaba, stated the developer. Collective Trojena will also offer direct access to the development’s full array of year-round and world-class outdoor activities including skiing and snowboarding, high altitude training, paragliding, mountain biking, hiking, and water sports as well as culture-forward programming around film, art, music, and food, it added. On its new venture, CEO and Founder Peter Mack said: "We founded Collective Retreats with the singular goal of changing the way people travel. We want travelers to see the world with renewed curiosity and a greater appreciation for conservation of the extraordinary natural beauty that surrounds us," "Trojena provides the ultimate backdrop to achieve this mission in ways we never imagined. In addition to giving a global audience a new perspective on this spectacular mountain setting, we are committed to demonstrating that luxury travel should not be extractive and it's possible to both preserve the environment and deliver extraordinary guest experiences," he noted. Set within Neom, Trojena is paving the way for the next frontier in sustainability by powering the mountain destination with a combination of solar and wind energy, while developing technology in water desalination and brine processing to achieve zero waste residual. "Since its inception, Collective Retreats has been lauded for its innovative thinking and passionate commitment to sustainability making them the ideal partner for the Trojena Neom project," said Philip Gullett, Executive Director and Region Head at Trojena. "Collective Retreats will be outstanding stewards of this new outdoor retreat experience in Trojena and will perfectly complement the environmental and sustainability principles and practices that are at the core of the Neom project," he added. According to Neom, Collective Trojena is among several new projects the brand plans to announce in 2023. The partnership marks the latest agreement between a prominent brand and Neom’s hotel development division which is responsible for building a future-centric hospitality ecosystem in the region. Chris Newman, the Executive Director for Hotel Development at Neom said Collective Retreats had a well-earned reputation for connecting guests to the most spectacular natural settings, in ways that few others have done before, while staying true to its core values of conservation and sustainability. "With Trojena, and Neom overall being home to some of the most breath-taking landscapes, we’re thrilled to have selected a partner that shares our ambition to forge a new path for our industry, one that’s characterized by travelers living with nature," he added. (Zawya)

- **Egypt-Saudi Arabia bilateral trade hits $9.5bn in 11 months -** The trade exchange value between Egypt and Saudi Arabia amounted to $9.50bn during the first 11 months (11M) of 2022, an annual increase of 19.10% from $7.90bn. Egypt exported goods worth $2.20bn to Saudi Arabia in January-November 2022, up 7.50 year-on-year (YoY) from $2bn, according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). Meanwhile, the Arab Republic's imports from the Kingdom rose by 23.20% YoY to $7.30bn in 11M-22 from $5.90bn. During fiscal year (FY) 2021/2022, Saudi investments in Egypt were valued at $491.60mn, an annual leap of 51.10% from $325.30mn. Remittances of Egyptians working in Saudi Arabia hit $11.20bn in FY20/21, higher by 17% than $9.60bn in FY19/20. The remittances of Saudi citizens working in Egypt grew by 4.90% YoY to $18.50mn in FY20/21 from $17.60mn. (Zawya)

- **Masdar makes strategic investment in Pertamina Geothermal Energy -** Masdar, a leading global clean energy company, has announced a strategic investment in Pertamina Geothermal Energy (PGE), one of the largest geothermal players worldwide. This marks Masdar's entry into the geothermal energy sector, in the world's second-largest geothermal market. Dr Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, and Chairman Masdar, said, “Achieving the 1.5C target set out in the Paris Accords will require humanity to leverage all sources of low-carbon energy, including sources that are currently under-utilized, like geothermal. Through its investment in PGE, Masdar is demonstrating its continuing commitment to Indonesia’s energy transition and its support of one of the major focus areas of the upcoming COP28, which is to provide practical energy security solutions while reducing emissions.” Ahmad Yuniarto, Chief Executive Officer, PGE, said, “We look forward to working with Masdar in the areas which complement and grow further our capabilities to be a world class green energy company, with the largest geothermal capacity globally. We endeavor to develop 600 megawatts (MW) in additional installed capacity over the next five years to support Indonesia’s renewable energy mix.” Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi, Chief Executive Officer Masdar, said, “Masdar’s strategic investment in PGE will complement our already strong footprint in Indonesia, the world’s second largest geothermal market. We are especially excited to add geothermal energy to our clean energy portfolio, a clean energy source that can deliver dispatchable power 24 hours a day, which further underscores our position as a global leader in delivering clean energy solutions that help drive the global energy transition.” Indonesia has a goal of increasing its installed geothermal capacity from 2.8 gigawatts (GW) in 2022 to 6.2 GW by 2030. The Government is targeting net-zero emissions by 2060 and having renewables provide 23% of the energy mix by 2023. PGE has been operating geothermal facilities in Indonesia for the last 40 years, with a portfolio capacity exceeding 1.87 GW. Geothermal energy harnesses the heat generated within the Earth’s core to provide a constant energy source, unlike solar or wind, which are intermittent in nature. Geothermal energy plants also have high-capacity factors, meaning they can run at maximum power for longer periods. These attributes mean geothermal energy could potentially play a significant role in the clean energy transition, helping nations with a high concentration of geothermal activity to reduce carbon emissions. The PGE investment is the latest in Masdar’s ongoing effort to expand and increase its strategic partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region. Masdar is already developing the region’s largest floating solar facility – the 145-MW Cirata Floating Solar PV Plant in Indonesia – and last year signed an agreement with Tuas Power, EDF Renewables, and PT Indonesia Power to explore development of up to 1.2 GW solar capacity in Indonesia for export to Singapore. Masdar recently announced a new shareholding structure and additional focus on green hydrogen, making it one of the largest clean energy companies of its kind. With a goal of achieving 100 GW renewable energy capacity and green hydrogen production of 1mn tonnes per annum annually by 2030, the new Masdar is a clean energy powerhouse that will spearhead the UAE’s Net Zero by 2050 Strategic Initiative and drive the global energy transition. (Zawya)

- **Dubai ruler amends e-licensing, e-ticketing decree, waives 10% fee on ticket sales -** The Dubai government is waiving the 10% fee levied on ticket sales at paid events across the emirate, as part of a move to support organizers and further boost the emirate’s competitiveness, according to a new statement on Friday. The government normally collects a fee for each ticket sold at paid events, equivalent to 10% of the actual or estimated value of the entry price, or up to AED10 ($2.72) per guest. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, has just issued Decree No. (5) of 2023 amending some provisions pertaining to the e-licensing and e-ticking system for events in Dubai. Under the new decree, Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) waives the collection of the 10% ticketing fee. However, the government will continue to levy the fees for the annual subscription to its e-permit and e-ticketing system. The new decree is aimed at raising Dubai’s economic competitiveness, creating a pro-growth business environment and further raising standards across sectors. “The regulatory amendments, which reaffirm the importance of this sector, provide a strong impetus to the growth of entertainment activities, events and festivals and encourage event companies to organize distinctive events that can attract more visitors to Dubai,” said Ahmed Al Khaja, CEO of Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment. Dubai believes that by waiving the 10% fee, organizers will be more profitable, and they will be encouraged to initiate activities that will boost visitor traffic to Dubai. “By raising the profitability of organizers of events, the new decree provides a strong boost to the sector, which in turn will help attract more people to attend events and festivals in the city,” the statement said. Dubai is one of the leading destinations for international events and exhibitions in the region. Last year, the emirate won at least 232 bids to host global business events. (Zawya)

- **UAE: Abdullah bin Zayed, Algerian Industry Minister discuss enhancing bilateral cooperation -** HH Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; and Ahmed Zeghdar, Algerian Minister of Industry, have discussed prospects for enhancing cooperation between the two countries, especially in the economic, industrial and commercial sectors. In a meeting between Sheikh Abdullah and Zeghdar in Abu Dhabi, they reviewed several issues of common concerns, including the UAE's hosting of the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) this year, and ways to advance cooperation in areas that contribute to sustainable economic growth. Sheikh Abdullah welcomed the visit of Minister Zeghdar, highlighting the depth of the UAE-Algeria ties and both parties' interest in boosting cooperation across several sectors. Zeghdar, in turn, reaffirmed his country's aspiration to develop cooperation with the UAE in various sectors. The meeting was also attended by Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade. (Zawya)
- **Bilateral trade between UAE and Kuwait grows 87% in 10 years -** Non-oil foreign trade between the UAE and Kuwait has grown 87% over the past ten years to reach AED43bn by the end of 2022, compared to AED23.3bn in 2013, according to preliminary data issued by the UAE's Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre (FCSC). The FCSC data showed that the total trade between the two countries during 2013-2022 amounted to AED316.2bn, of which re-exports constituted 53% and valued at over AED168bn, non-oil exports represented 27% and worth more than AED85bn, and imports were 20%, to the tune of AED62.8bn. Non-oil trade between the UAE and Kuwait grew 13%, worth AED5bn last year, to reach AED43.5bn, compared to AED38.5bn in 2021. Of the non-oil trade between the two countries during the previous year, re-exports were valued at AED21.9bn, non-oil exports AED14.2bn, and imports AED7.3bn. Mineral oils topped the list of the top five commodities imported from Kuwait to the UAE during 2022, worth more than AED6bn; while raw gold topped the list of the top five commodities exported from the UAE to Kuwait, value at AED3.3bn, followed by jewelry worth AED3bn. While communications equipment topped the list of top 5 commodities that were re-exported from the UAE to Kuwait during 2022, valued at AED3.52bn, followed by medicines and treatment drugs to the tune of AED1.7bn, and data processing machines worth AED1.46bn. (Zawya)
- **UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain set to announce joint industrial projects worth millions -** Ministers from the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, and Bahrain are set to meet on Sunday where they will oversee the signing of agreements between industrial companies for projects worth millions of dollars. The third meeting of the Higher Committee of the Industrial Partnership for Sustainable Economic Development will take place in Jordan's capital Amman, where representatives from the four countries will discuss the partnership's latest developments as well as joint industrial projects. The meeting will also result in a report and recommendations from the Executive Committee. Yousef Al Shamali, Jordan's Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply and Minister of Labor, will chair the meeting with the participation of Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology; Ahmed Samir Saleh, Egypt's Minister of Industry and Trade; and Abdulla bin Adel Fakhro, Bahrain's Minister of Industry and Commerce. Under the partnership, the member states will collaborate to grow their respective industrial sectors by integrating resources and industries and leveraging competitive advantages. The countries will also work together to reduce costs, enhance supply chains, create job opportunities, contribute to economic development, promote self-sufficiency, and boost industrial competitiveness. Various agreements will be signed between industrial companies from the UAE, Egypt, Jordan and Bahrain. New projects will follow with investments worth hundreds of millions of dollars. These investments will strengthen the partnership, empower the member nations' respective industrial sectors, grow the sectors' contribution to GDP, bolster supply chains, reduce costs, and create new job opportunities. (Zawya)
- **Sales in UAE restaurants, cafes to rise 50% to $23.5bn by 2027 -** The UAE’s restaurants, cafes and other foodservice outlets are expected to see a nearly 50% rise in sales in a few years as consumer spending rebounds after the COVID-19 pandemic, according to new data released on Thursday. Consumer foodservice outlets across the UAE generated AED 58.4bn ($15.9bn) in sales last year, driven by the rapid response and recovery from the pandemic, as well as strong economic growth, the Dubai Chamber of Commerce said, quoting data from Euromonitor International. The figure is poised to grow by 48% to AED 86.4bn ($23.5bn) by 2027, said Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, President and CEO of Dubai Chamber. Euromonitor regularly tracks foodservice data, which includes cafes, bars, full-service and limited-service restaurants, as well as self-service cafeterias. During 2022, sales at full-service restaurants alone reached AED 32.5bn, up by 24%. The Dubai Chamber shared the figures as it launched six business groups within the F&B industry for HORECA traders, meat and poultry, bakeries, organic food, groceries, as well as hypermarkets and supermarkets sectors. The chamber is looking to set up 100 business groups by 2023. The groups will focus on promoting the development of food companies to boost the profile of Dubai’s food and beverage sector in the global community, the chamber noted. (Zawya)
- **EHRDC partners with ‘UAE Food and Beverage Business Group’ to launch ‘Ishraq’ -** The Emirati Human Resources Development Council in Dubai (EHRDC) has partnered with the UAE Food and Beverage Business Group to launch the "Ishraq" program, a first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at creating a skilled Emirati workforce in the food and beverage (F&B) sector. The program was announced during the Gulfood 2023, the world's largest annual global food and beverage sourcing event, and was attended by senior representatives from 19 top F&B companies who all signed memorandums of understanding confirming their support for the initiative. The Ishraq program will provide on-the-job training to over 500 Emiratis each year, enabling them to contribute to and actively participate in various F&B roles, including food production and others. The program is designed to bridge the skills gap in the sector and create new career opportunities for Emiratis while ensuring that companies have a sufficient talent pool to recruit from annually to achieve their Emiratization goals. The program includes assessment, coaching, and mentoring, and a curriculum that is integrated with on-the-job training. By providing a comprehensive career development program, the F&B industry will become an even more attractive career option for Emiratis looking to build a career in this important sector. Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansoori, Chair of the EHRDC, said, "We are delighted to partner with the top F&B companies in our country to launch this groundbreaking program. The F&B sector is a strategic pillar in our nation's economy, and we believe that this initiative will help bridge the skills gap in the industry, while creating new career opportunities for Emiratis." Saleh Lootah, Chairman of UAE Food and Beverage Business Group, added, "Our partnership with the EHRDC on this initiative is a source of pride for us. We believe that by offering a career pathway and mentoring to Emiratis who want to work in the food sector, we can help create experts in the F&B sector under the guidance of experienced mentors. With its collaborative approach and comprehensive training, the Ishraq program is a valuable investment in the future of the industry." The Emirati Human Resources Development Council in Dubai includes representatives from the public and private sector and oversees the implementation of policies, plans, and initiatives aimed at enhancing the employment of Emiratis in the private sector. (Zawya)
- **DIFC unveils new venture studio regulations for consultation -** Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) has proposed to enact new Venture Studio Regulations to establish the first global legal framework for the regulation of venture building. The proposed regulations seek to enable, enhance and promote venture building from within DIFC. In April 2022, DIFC announced the launch of the first global “Venture Studio Launchpad” to assist with the growth of DIFC’s financial ecosystem (see press release: link). In particular, DIFC aims to be a growth partner and business enabler to venture builder studios, allowing them to set up and scale from the Centre. In doing so, DIFC also further supports entrepreneurs and the growth of start-up businesses in and from the Centre. Jacques Visser, Chief Legal Officer at DIFC, said: “The introduction

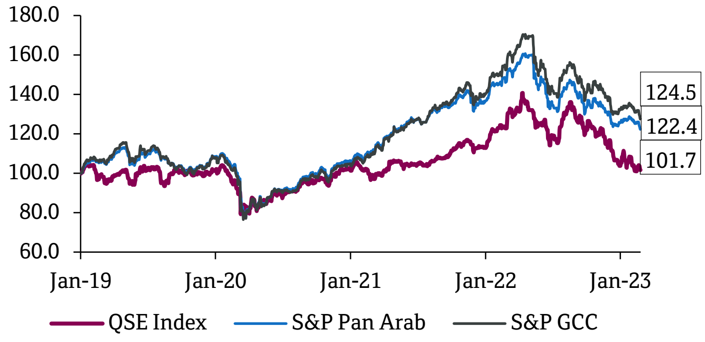
of global first-of-its-kind DIFC Venture Studio Regulations will add further depth to the DIFC's thriving innovation ecosystem. The proposed regulations provide a legal framework that enables the scaling of businesses; the ability to develop, test and launch new start-ups; and which supports venture builders, entrepreneurs and investors. DIFC is committed to providing a robust regulatory environment for businesses to operate with confidence and certainty, including in new and developing sectors." The key benefits of the proposed Venture Studio Regulations include providing the world's first legislative framework for venture building and in doing so, establishing legal certainty for the venture building model. It will also provide certainty on how venture studios, entrepreneurs and spin-off entities deal with each other and the wider market. Additionally, it will facilitate the ease of doing business within the venture studio model, with specific operational measures implemented to enable the incubation of new business ideas, sponsorship of entrepreneurs and reduced costs for the scaling of new businesses. The proposed regulations will form tailored ecosystem for venture building, entrepreneurs, start-ups and investors. Furthermore, it allows forming a tailored ecosystem for venture building, entrepreneurs, start-ups and investors. The proposed regulations have been posted for a 30-day public consultation period with the deadline for providing comments ending on March 19. (Zawya)

- **UAE, Spain explore investment exchange opportunities -** Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, held a meeting with Xiana Mendez, Secretary of State for Trade at the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and discussed strengthening the trade and economic cooperation. Emphasizing the deep historic relations between the UAE and Spain, Al Zeyoudi pointed out that both leaderships remain equally keen to enhance the existing cooperation as part of their respective economic development visions. Al Zeyoudi said, "The bilateral trade figures demonstrate the rapid growth of the UAE-Spain economic relations. Our non-oil trade exchanges exceeded $2.6bn in 2022. The UAE's non-oil exports to Spain totaled $360mn last year while re-exports amounted to $181mn." He added, "We are keen to strengthen our economic and trade partnership with Spain. Spain has become the UAE's third biggest European partner in 2022 as it received 8% of the UAE's total non-oil exports to the EU countries. In addition, the Spanish market is a key global market that enjoys special attention from the UAE's business community. The UAE's total investments in Spain reached approximately $3.8bn by the end of 2021 while Spanish foreign direct investment (FDI) in the UAE totaled $72mn by the end 2020." The meeting explored means to enhance existing economic and trade relations between the two countries and diversify them in sectors of common interest. In addition, both parties agreed to support investment exchanges in the fields of entrepreneurship, tourism, innovation, technology, food security, real estate, logistics, mining, transformative industries, renewable energy and other future economic sectors that support the sustainable development of both economies. The means to create new mechanisms that facilitate the access of business communities to promising opportunities in both markets were also discussed. Al Zeyoudi elaborated on the UAE's prestigious position on the global economic landscape, as well as the measures adopted by the country to transition towards a sustainable knowledge economy based on innovation, in light of "Principles of the 50" and "UAE Centennial 2021". Most notable legislative amendments include the granting of full foreign ownership, enhanced intellectual property protection and the launch of an ambitious strategy to attract talented and creative individuals to all sectors, which boosts the UAE's position as a hub for creativity and innovation. Moreover, Al Zeyoudi asserted that the UAE's market offers diverse opportunities and incentives that can support the growth of Spanish companies in the UAE and the wider MENA region. He further invited the Spanish private sector to leverage the benefits and incentives offered by the UAE economy to promote economic cooperation. These include Investopia that aims to create opportunities and empower future investments, as well as Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPAs). The UAE has signed three CEPAs – with India, Israel, and Indonesia – and negotiations are going on with many other countries. (Zawya)
- **Dubai Chamber of Commerce launches six new food business groups -** Dubai Chamber of Commerce, one of the three chambers operating under Dubai Chambers, has launched six business groups within the F&B industry for HORECA traders, meat and poultry, bakeries, organic food, groceries as well as hypermarkets and supermarkets sectors. "We are on track to reach our goal of setting up 100 business groups by March 2023. These six new business groups will help boost the dynamism of Dubai's F&B industry where UAE consumer foodservice outlets sales are expected to reach AED86.4bn by 2027," said Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, President & CEO of Dubai Chambers. "Business groups are imperative in ensuring representation of all the business and economic sectors in Dubai. They help facilitate mutual dialogue between stakeholders and government entities and are key to addressing policy matters and enhancing the competitiveness of their respective sectors," he added. According to Euromonitor, UAE consumer foodservice sales value reached AED58.4bn in 2022. This figure was driven by the rapid response and recovery from the pandemic as well as strong economic growth. Fresh food sales are anticipated to grow at a CAGR of 4.9% between 2022 and 2027, while packaged food will see a predicted growth of about 3.9% between the same period. Food manufacturers across the Middle East are predicted to grow profits by a CAGR of 3.6% up to 2026. (Zawya)
- **Emirates, IKEA, Lulu Hypermarket rank among top 5 UAE brands -** The UAE's top brands quickened their digital transformation to improve engagement with customers during and after the pandemic, with Emirates, IKEA and Lulu Hypermarket overtaking a majority of retail brands. This is according to KPMG's 2022 Customer Experience Excellence (CEE) report, which captured the views of more than 89,000 customers on their experiences with brands across the UAE. Emirates has retained the top spot for upholding its legacy of outstanding service and customer engagement. Leading in all six CEE pillars, Emirates demonstrated a well-executed end-to-end CX. IKEA earned a CX top ranking for its wide range of product categories available at a one stop-shop, as well as its home delivery service featuring real time updates on the status and progress of orders. Meanwhile, many companies steadily improved their CX rankings since 2017 as a result of accessibility of stores, high-quality of customer service and loyalty apps. Services such as digital solutions and immersive guest experiences, including upgrading their visual communications platforms to enhance scheduling flexibility and adding professional video syncing capabilities, earned companies a top spot with consumers. (Zawya)
- **India, UAE plan virtual trade corridor to fast-track cargo shipments -** India and the UAE are looking to build a virtual trade corridor to facilitate faster clearance of cargo shipments, Indian financial daily Mint reported. The move will help reduce customs clearance costs and time and speed up bilateral trade. The two countries expect non-oil trade to touch $100bn over the five years post-implementation of the comprehensive free trade agreement on May 1, 2022. "The idea of a virtual corridor is to fast-track shipments. It will explore if we can do the clearances in an online way, especially for very important hubs like Dubai and Abu Dhabi, which connect India and the rest of the world," India's Ambassador to the UAE Sunjay Sudhir told the financial daily. The customs authorities of the two countries will examine the potential of accessing pre-arrival information for cargo movement, making cross-validation of information significantly faster and facilitating pre-clearance of goods, the newspaper said. (Zawya)
- **UAE's trade with Azerbaijan increases 3-fold in 5 years, up 270% -** Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, said that the UAE-Azerbaijan economic and trade relations are witnessing steady development, noting that the value of their non-oil trade increased by over three times during the past five years. In a statement to the Emirates News Agency (WAM), Al Zeyoudi stated that the non-oil trade between the two countries totaled more than AED10.2bn over the past five years, rising 270% from AED974.2mn in 2018 to AED3.6bn in 2022, an increase of 46% compared to 2021. He added that the trade between the two countries in 2022 was distributed between AED32.6mn in imports, AED351.9mn in exports, and AED3.5bn in re-exports. "The significant rise in the foreign trade exchange comes in light of the increase in investments, cooperation and exchanging experiences," Al Zeyoudi said. He added that Azerbaijan is a gateway to Eastern Europe and many markets in the region. Al Zeyoudi highlighted various sectors that create food investment opportunities in both countries, including services, real

estate, food security and logistics. He stated that there are many sectors that constitute good opportunities for investment in the UAE and Azerbaijan, including the service sector, real estate, food security and the logistics sector. The economic and trade relations between the two countries are witnessing continued development and diversification, most notably in the areas of renewable and environmentally friendly energy, he added. The UAE's non-oil exports to Azerbaijan consist of non-crude petroleum oils, tobacco products, automatic spraying devices, pressure-reducing taps and valves, plastic products, various chemical products, gold, perfumes, paper products, aluminum, tea and organic chemical products, he explained. Al Zeyoudi noted that the most important re-export commodities were phones, TV screens, cars and their parts, pumps, fans, computers, aircraft parts, aluminum sheets, mineral oils, tires, paper and related products. The main import commodities were gold, jewelry and their manufactures, plants, tobacco products, copper wires, copper products, shell fruits and others. (Zawya)

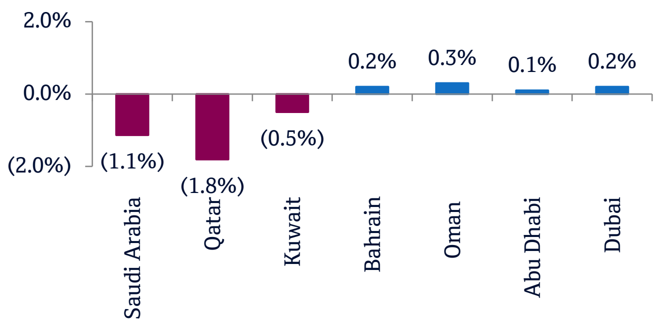
- **Dubai Chambers' membership grows by 20% to 347,600 -** Dubai International Chamber opened four new international offices in 2022, growing its international network to 15 offices. Dubai Chambers has recorded 20% year-on-year increase in its membership while the members' exports and re-exports also rose by 20% to Dh272bn in 2022. While unveiling a series of accomplishments for 2022 during a media briefing at its headquarters, the chamber highlighted its diverse initiatives to support Dubai's business community and dedication to realizing its strategic goals in alignment with the city's future development plans. Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, Chairman of Dubai Chambers; Omar Sultan Al Olama, Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications, and Chairman of the Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy; Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman of Dubai International Chamber; and Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, President and CEO of Dubai Chambers; attended the event in Dubai on Tuesday. Dubai Chamber of Commerce saw a 20% increase in membership to 347,600, with 56,000 new members joining it during the year. In addition, the exports and re-exports of Dubai Chamber of Commerce members grew by 20% in 2022, totaling Dh272.7bn, demonstrating the resilience of Dubai's traders and their capacity to expand their exports into new markets. Dubai International Chamber opened four new international offices in 2022, growing its international network to 15 offices. During the year, the international offices conducted 2,031 meetings with investors. Another significant accomplishment for the chamber was attracting five multinational corporations and 16 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to Dubai, as well as assisting nine Dubai-based companies in expanding to new global markets. Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy conducted international outreach in collaboration with other relevant government entities, which resulted in attracting 203 tech entrepreneurs and experts as well as 54 high-potential start-ups to Dubai. Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy was the strategic partner of North Star Dubai 2022, an event that drew 100,000 attendees from 170 countries, including 800 startups. The event also hosted 600 investors with a portfolio of over $500bn and 35 global unicorns which had a combined market value of $216bn. (Zawya)
- **Sheikh Hamdan charts a course for city's accelerated growth -** HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, today met with over 150 prominent leaders from Dubai's public and private sectors to explore ways of achieving the goals of the city's strategic vision for sustainable growth within the framework of the Dubai Economic Agenda D33. The meeting, held at the Dubai Majlis, was organized by the Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) in cooperation with Dubai Chambers at Qasr Al Bahr in Dubai. Titled the 'Dubai Majlis-D33', the event brought together leading business personalities and entrepreneurs, key representatives of UAE-based multinational companies, international investors and senior officials of Dubai government entities for wide ranging discussions on the city's economic policies, reforms and long-term development plans. During the meeting, HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed highlighted the unique model of public-private sector partnership in Dubai, which supports the objectives of the Dubai Economic Agenda D33 launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, with the aim of doubling the size of Dubai's economy over the next decade and consolidating its status as one of the top three global cities. "The strong partnerships between Dubai's public and private sectors have led to exceptional economic outcomes in the emirate and were a key driver of its growth. We seek to further consolidate these partnerships and enhance the city's business environment to support the growth of private sector companies in Dubai. New creative initiatives and solutions are vital to achieving the objectives set by HH Sheikh Mohammed in the D33 Agenda for the next ten years," His Highness said. Sheikh Hamdan added that he was confident in the ability of both the public and private sectors to achieve the objectives of the D33 Agenda, which seeks to transform Dubai into the best city to live, work and invest. The gathering, attended by His Excellency Abdul-Aziz Abdulla Al Ghurair, Chairman of Dubai Chambers, and His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General of Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, provided participants an opportunity to exchange views and ideas on the D33 Agenda. The Dubai Majlis-D33 discussed efforts to realize the ambitious goals of the D33 Agenda, under the guidance of HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed, the follow-up of His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Finance of the UAE; and the concerted efforts of government teams working closely with the private sector. The gathering also highlighted the various steps taken by the Government of Dubai to ensure continuous collaboration between the public and private sectors. (Zawya)
- **Oman's Abraj signs oil drilling and extraction deal with Chevron, Kuwait Gulf Oil Company -** Oman's Abraj Energy Services said on Saturday it had signed a five-year 'strategic partnership deal' with Kuwait Gulf Oil Company and Saudi Arabian Chevron to extract and drill for oil in Kuwait. The deal will see Abraj build three drilling platforms in the Wafra oilfield in Kuwait, the company said in a statement. The deal comes "within the framework of strengthening (the company's) position and expanding its operations in the Middle East and North Africa," the statement read. (Reuters)
- **Kuwait's Al Zour to ramp up oil products exports from record levels in Jan -** Kuwait is set to ramp up refined oil product exports from its new Al Zour refinery in the second half of 2023 to plug Russian shortfalls in Europe and meet growing demand in Asia and Africa, industry sources and analysts said. The much delayed 615,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) refinery is one of several new complexes coming online this year across the world to churn out more oil products and cool refining margins from record levels last year following the disruption of supplies from top exporter Russia. Kuwait is boosting oil products exports to Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas after Western sanctions on Russia reshuffled energy trade routes globally. The OPEC producer is expected to reduce crude exports and crank up product shipments as it starts up another two crude distillation units (CDUs) at Al Zour later this year to operate the refinery at full capacity, the sources said. Al Zour, designed to process medium-heavy crudes, started up the first 205,000 bpd CDU in September, is currently running at between 70% and 80% of its capacity as it stabilizes production, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters. Kuwait's key refined products exports hit an all-time high of 17mn barrels in January, up 30% on the year, as Al Zour shipped more fuel oil to the Singapore Strait, diesel and jet fuel to Europe, and naphtha to China, South Korea and Japan, Kpler data showed. Consultancy FGE expects Al Zour's second CDU to start up in March or April while the third one could come online by August. The three CDUs are of equal capacity. "Full impact to the products market will likely be felt in H2 2023," FGE's Asia refining head Ivan Mathews said. The Al Zour refinery is operated by Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company, a subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, which did not immediately respond to a request for comment. (Reuters)

## *Rebased Performance*




*Source: Bloomberg*

## *Daily Index Performance*




*Source: Bloomberg*

| Asset/Currency Performance | Close ($) | 1D% | WTD% | YTD% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gold/Ounce | 1,811.04 | (0.6) | (1.7) | (0.7) |
| Silver/Ounce | 20.76 | (2.6) | (4.4) | (13.3) |
| Crude Oil (Brent)/Barrel (FM Future) | 83.16 | 1.2 | 0.2 | (3.2) |
| Crude Oil (WTI)/Barrel (FM Future) | 76.32 | 1.2 | (0.0) | (4.9) |
| Natural Gas (Henry Hub)/MMBtu | 2.36 | 8.8 | 3.5 | (33.0) |
| LPG Propane (Arab Gulf)/Ton | 82.00 | 3.1 | 1.9 | 15.9 |
| LPG Butane (Arab Gulf)/Ton | 133.00 | 3.7 | 8.6 | 31.0 |
| Euro | 1.05 | (0.5) | (1.4) | (1.5) |
| Yen | 136.48 | 1.3 | 1.7 | 4.1 |
| GBP | 1.19 | (0.6) | (0.8) | (1.2) |
| CHF | 1.06 | (0.7) | (1.6) | (1.7) |
| AUD | 0.67 | (1.2) | (2.2) | (1.3) |
| USD Index | 105.21 | 0.6 | 1.3 | 1.6 |
| RUB | 110.69 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 58.9 |
| BRL | 0.19 | (1.3) | (0.7) | 1.6 |

*Source: Bloomberg*

| Global Indices Performance | Close | 1D%* | WTD%* | YTD%* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MSCI World Index | 2,706.91 | (1.1) | (2.6) | 4.0 |
| DJ Industrial | 32,816.92 | (1.0) | (3.0) | (1.0) |
| S&P 500 | 3,970.04 | (1.1) | (2.7) | 3.4 |
| NASDAQ 100 | 11,394.94 | (1.7) | (3.3) | 8.9 |
| STOXX 600 | 457.70 | (1.4) | (2.6) | 6.1 |
| DAX | 15,209.74 | (2.1) | (3.0) | 7.6 |
| FTSE 100 | 7,878.66 | (0.8) | (2.2) | 4.4 |
| CAC 40 | 7,187.27 | (2.1) | (3.4) | 9.3 |
| Nikkei | 27,453.48 | 0.0 | (1.8) | 1.0 |
| MSCI EM | 971.87 | (1.6) | (2.8) | 1.6 |
| SHANGHAI SE Composite | 3,267.16 | (1.3) | 0.0 | 4.8 |
| HANG SENG | 20,010.04 | (1.7) | (3.5) | 0.5 |
| BSE SENSEX | 59,463.93 | (0.6) | (2.8) | (2.6) |
| Bovespa | 105,798.43 | (3.0) | (3.7) | (2.0) |
| RTS | 914.16 | (1.6) | (0.7) | (5.8) |

*Source: Bloomberg (*$ adjusted returns, Data as of February 24, 2023)*

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