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Private sector drives Qatar's next phase of growth: Sheikh Faisal

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Commercial Bank rewards 'smart savers' at a grand prize ceremony

Commercial banks' assets reach QR2.15tn in September: QCB

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

Qatar's commercial banks reported a 6.2% year-on-year jump in total assets to QR2.15tn in September 2025, according to Qatar Central Bank data.

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Domestic assets amounted to QR1.83tn or 85% of the total assets of the commercial banks and foreign assets stood at QR0.32tn or 15% of the total in the review period.

Total domestic credit expanded by 5.5% year-on-year to QR1.36tn another end of September 2025, the central bank said in its social media handle X. Commercial bank's overseas credit amounted to QR65.58bn in the review period.

Private sector credit stood at QR955.08bn (67% of the total credit), public sector credit amounted to QR457.2bn (32%) and credit facilities to non-banking financial institutions were QR9.77bn at the end of September 2025.

Of the QR955.08bn private sector credit, commercial banks' domestic credit amounted to QR916.67bn and outside Qatar amounted to QR38.4bn in the review period.

In the case of public sector, commercial banks' domestic credit amounted to QR432.15bn and outside Qatar stood at QR25.04bn in September 2025.

Of the total QR1.36tn domestic credit from the commercial banks, services received QR471.35bn, real estate (QR267.78bn), trading (QR215.2bn), consumption loans (QR180.78bn), government (QR154.44bn), industry (QR27.44bn) and contractors (QR36.96bn) in the review period.

Commercial lenders' other assets stood at QR500.31bn with inside Qatar at QR40.14bn and outside the country at QR10.17bn in the review period.

Commercial banks' securities portfolio stood at QR341.81bn with debt securities at QR200.43bn and sukuk at QR134.43bn at the end of September 2025.

Of the QR341.81bn total securities portfolio, domestic portfolio stood at QR302bn and outside Qatar at QR39.81bn during the review period.

Of the QR200.43bn debt securities, those issued by governments amounted to QR127.51bn, banks at QR10.06bn and others at QR62.86bn. In the case of sukuks, those issued by government stood at QR118.12bn, banks at QR10.91bn and others at QR5.4bn at the end of September 2025.

The banks' investments in subsidiaries and associated amounted to QR52.89bn with inside Qatar at QR7.08bn and outside the country at QR45.81bn at the end of September 2025.

Total domestic deposits were up 1.6% year-on-year to QR861.1bn, of which personal deposits stood at QR277.61bn, government institutions' at QR201.58bn, private sector at QR195.81bn, semi-government entities' at QR39.36bn and non-banking financial institutions at QR14.81bn in September 2025.

Broad money supply (M2) rose 1.6% year-on-year to QR749.2bn in September 2025.

Al-Kaabi meets Namibia's prime minister

HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi met Dr Elijah Ngurare, Prime Minister of Namibia in Doha. Discussions during the meeting dealt with energy relations and co-operation between Qatar and Namibia and means to enhance them.

Hamad Port records higher movement of bulk cargoes and RORO in October

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

Hamad Port – whose multi-use terminal is designed to serve the supply chains for the RORO, grains and livestock – has reported increased bulk cargoes and vehicles (RORO) handling this October.

The port handled as much as 158,500 freight tonnes of bulk, which is loaded directly into ship's holds without individual units, in October, registering 46.72% and 252.05% gains month-on-month and year-on-year respectively.

It handled a total of 27,611 freight tonnes of breakbulk, which is non-containerised cargo loaded as individual units, this October, which however fell 77.13% and 69.68% on monthly and annualised basis respectively.

Hamad Port, whose strategic geographical location offers opportunities to create cargo movement towards the upper Gulf, supporting countries such as Kuwait and Iraq and south towards Oman, saw as many as 126 vessels call (excluding military) in the review period, registering 2.33% and 15.46% decline month-on-month and year-on-year respectively.

In the case of RORO, Hamad Port handled as many as 9,497 units this October, which reported a 2.96% increase on a monthly basis, even as it plummeted 41.81% on an annualised basis.

Qatar's automobile sector has been witnessing stronger sales, notably in heavy equipment, private motorcycles and private vehicles, according to the data from the National Planning Council.

RORO ships – which are designed to transport vehicles like cars, trucks, and motorcycles – feature ramps that allow vehicles to drive directly on and off, eliminating the need for cranes and making it an efficient way to move cargo across the seas.

Hamad Port saw 171,555 freight tonnes in RORO in October 2025, which declined 3.31% and 36.1% month-on-month and year-on-year respectively.

Hamad Port, which is the largest eco-friendly project in the region and internationally recognised as one of the largest green ports in the world, saw 119,877 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) this October.

The container terminals have been designed to address the increasing trade volume, enhance ease of doing business and support economic diversification, which is one of the most vital goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

With a stacking area of 176,000sq m, the container terminal 2 or CT2 is equipped with the latest advanced technology, including remote-operated ship-to-shore cranes, hybrid rubber-tyred gantries, and electric tractors.

The container and cargo trends through the ports reflect the positive outlook for the country's non-oil private sector.

In line with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030, Mwani Qatar continues to implement its ambitious strategy to enhance the maritime sector's contribution to diversifying the national economy and strengthening the county's position as a vibrant regional trade hub.

Commercial Bank has successfully concluded its nine-month 'Golden Draw' campaign with a grand prize ceremony "celebrating customer loyalty and the power of saving". The event marked the culmination of Commercial Bank's 50th anniversary celebrations, with customers taking home five brand-new BYD cars and 5mn travel points

Commercial Bank rewards 'smart savers' at grand ceremony

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The event marked the culmination of Commercial Bank's 50th anniversary celebrations, with customers taking home five brand-new BYD cars and 5mn travel points.

Launched in January, the Golden Draw campaign invited customers to "Open, Save, and Win", encouraging positive saving habits and long-term financial planning.

Participants were eligible to enter by increasing their average monthly balance by QR10,000 or saving at least 50% of their monthly salary, a model designed to reward consistent and mindful savers.

Over the course of the campaign, customers stood the chance to win hundreds of prizes, including five new cars, five sets of 1mn travel points, 50 iPhone 16 devices, 50 QR5,000 cash prizes, 50 bundles of gold coins, and 50 electronic vouchers worth QR2,000 each.

The ceremony marked the final stage of the campaign, which ran from January 9 to September 4 this year.

Commercial Bank Group CEO Stephen Moss said: "As we celebrate 50 years of progress and partnership, this Golden Draw represents far more than rewards, it reflects our belief in the value of saving and the importance of financial wellbeing.

"At Commercial Bank, we are proud to empower our customers to achieve their financial goals responsibly while celebrating the trust and loyalty that have defined our journey over the past five decades."

The Golden Draw campaign has reaffirmed Commercial Bank's leadership in promoting financial inclusion and customer-centric innovation.

Turkish prices ease more than expected in boost to central bank

Bloomberg
Istanbul

Turkish inflation slowed more than expected in October, in a boost to the central bank's determination to continue cutting interest rates.

Prices rose 32.9% in October in annual terms, more slowly than the 33.3% the prior month, national statistics office TurkStat said on Monday. The median forecast in a Bloomberg survey of 18 estimates saw inflation stagnant at 33.2%.

Turkish lira briefly touched a record low ahead of the data release, then pared losses and was trading flat at 42.05 per dollar. The benchmark Borsa Istanbul 100 Index climbed as much as 1.5%, led by gains in bank shares — in likely anticipation of further rate cuts from the central bank.

Price pressures on a monthly basis stemmed from clothing followed by food and non-alcoholic beverages, data showed. In the minutes of its previous rate-setting meeting, the central bank had highlighted risks of food inflation in the disinflation process.

"Even as the latest print undershoots our inflation call, we still expect the CBRT to continue cutting rates at a measured pace. We see the one-week repo rate at 38.5% by December and 27.5% next year, down from 39.5% currently. Our current path already factors in seasonal price pressures and the central bank's cautious rate trim last month (which undercut our call by 50 bps)," says

Selva Bahar Baziki, economist, Bloomberg Economics.

Monday's print comes amid expectations central bank Governor Fatih Karahan may lift the outlook for inflation at a presentation scheduled for Friday. Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek added to that sense last week, when he said achieving the current goal looked "hard".

The central bank last placed year-end estimates between 25% and 29%, below market expectations for inflation to remain above 30%.

Higher inflation and political risks already led policymakers to cut interest rates at a slower pace in October. While the downward path remained intact, the central bank noted a slowdown in the disinflation process had prompted a more modest cut — borrowing costs were trimmed 100 basis points versus 250 basis points in September.

But it argued price pressures are mostly being driven by food or items like rent and education, whose costs are set based on past inflation and are, therefore, not immediately responsive to changes in monetary policy.

"There is still another CPI release due before the CBRT's next meeting in early December, but today's release suggests for now that the monetary easing cycle is likely to continue next month," Capital Economics' Emerging Europe economist Nicholas Farr said. "At this stage we think it is most likely to deliver another 100bp cut in its one-week repo rate (to 38.50%), as opposed to a bigger cut."

Monthly inflation eased to 2.6% from 3.2% in September, TurkStat said.

Still, economists have urged the central bank to take a more cautious approach to rate cuts, pointing out upside risks to inflation.

Ahead of Monday's data release, Deutsche Bank AG economists were expecting another 100 basis point cut from the Monetary Policy Committee when it meets in December. They raised their 2026-end inflation forecast to 23.8%, almost a percentage point higher than previously, according to a note published on October 23.

"Factors such as the absence of an anticipated swift economic deceleration, the wealth effect stemming from gold prices, limited scope for additional exchange rate support given competitiveness concerns, and inflation expectations persistently exceeding targets, collectively underpin the prognosis for continued inflation stickiness," analysts including Christian Wietoska and Yigit Onay wrote.

Microsoft vows to spend $8bn in UAE through 2029 on cloud, chips

Bloomberg
Abu Dhabi

Microsoft Corp is planning to spend more than $7.9bn on data centres, cloud computing and employees in the United Arab Emirates over the next four years, capitalising on a US government clearance to ship artificial intelligence chips to the Gulf nation.

Microsoft president Brad Smith announced the commitment on Monday in Abu Dhabi. The pledge includes plans to nearly triple the amount of Nvidia Corp advanced chips Microsoft will operate in the nation, bringing in critical equipment that has been restricted by the US government.

"This is not money we're raising here. It's money we're investing and spending here," Smith told Bloomberg Television at the sidelines of the ADIPEC oil conference in Abu Dhabi. "We are seeing demand here explode."

The Middle East nation has become a frequent partner for Silicon Valley companies thanks to its ample energy, oil wealth and deepening ties with Donald Trump's White House. Microsoft said it was the first US company to receive Trump Administration approvals to deploy AI chips in the UAE. The company said it will invest a total of $15.2bn in the country from 2023-2029.

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The software giant is spending lavishly on its cloud business and AI services, trying to fill a shortage of computing capacity. It's one of several tech giants racing to build out AI infrastructure despite some concerns of a bubble in the industry.

Earlier on Monday, Microsoft announced a $9.7bn deal with Australian data centre operator IREN Ltd for a facility in Texas.

In the UAE, Microsoft plans to spend more than $5.5bn in capital expenditures on cloud and AI infrastructure from the start of 2026 through 2029, according to Smith. The company said it will invest another $2.4bn or so on operating expenses and local hiring.

Microsoft has been an ally in the UAE's ambitions to diversify its economy from oil into a range of digital tech. In early 2024, Microsoft invested $1.5bn in G42, an Abu Dhabi AI firm that develops cybersecurity tools, cloud services and spacecraft. Smith joined G42's board.

Earlier this year, OpenAI, which counts Microsoft as its biggest backer, chose the UAE as the first country outside of the US to host a Stargate data centre project. But the Gulf state's access to leading semiconductors has been an open question. Bloomberg reported in October that the US approved the export of chips to American companies operating in the UAE, following a bilateral deal on the tech that drew national security concerns. The US has yet to approve the sale of Nvidia chips to Emirati companies, including G42, Bloomberg reported earlier.

Microsoft said it received US government licenses to ship AI chips to the UAE in September after meeting security criteria. "They're not just acts of faith," Smith said. "We had to satisfy very strict conditions about the cybersecurity, the physical security, the other security protection of these chips to ensure that they stay under our control."

The company said it previously deployed 21,500 chips equivalent to Nvidia's A100 graphics processing units in the UAE under approvals from the Joe Biden Administration. The company plans to ship 60,400 more chips equivalent to the A100, including some of Nvidia's new GB300 product. Those will come "in months, not years," according to Smith.

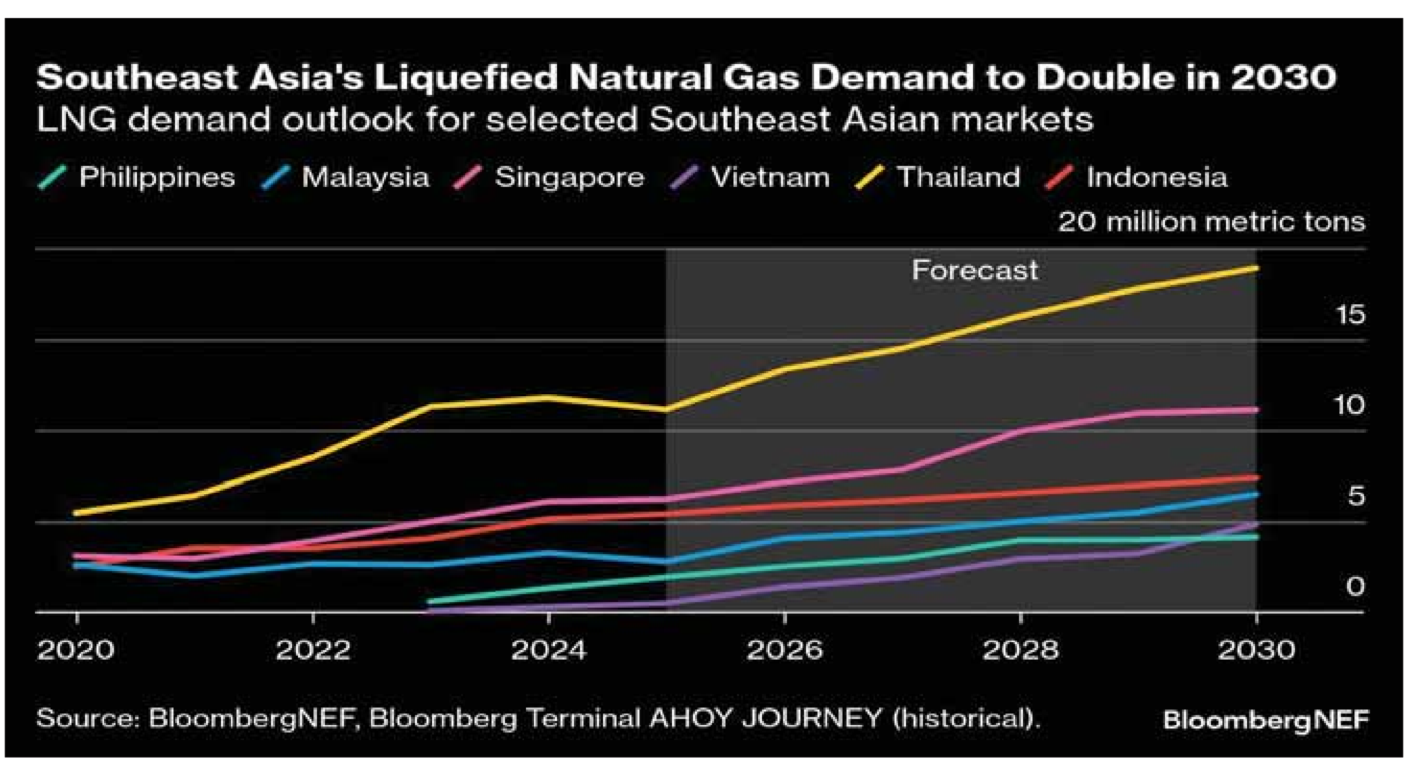
Microsoft has about 1,000 full-time engineers in the UAE and has opened an AI lab in the country. Aside from the $1.5bn deal with G42, Microsoft said it invested about $5.8bn in the UAE since the start of 2023. That means its annual spending pledge through 2029 is roughly on par with the past few years.

Japan's biggest LNG buyer sees opportunities in Southeast Asia

Bloomberg
Tokyo

Jera Co, Japan's largest power generation company and liquefied natural gas buyer, sees more opportunities to use the fuel to meet surging electricity demand in nations including current exporters Malaysia and Indonesia.

It is "very difficult to fill the gap" between declining domestic gas production and rising energy demand in Southeast Asia with renewables and battery storage alone, Izumi Kai, chief executive officer of Singapore-based unit Jera Asia Pte, has said in an. The company is "always looking for new opportunities," and will consider divestment of existing assets to "recycle cash for new investments," he said. Southeast Asia's LNG demand will almost double from last year's level by 2030, according to BloombergNEF. That's helping turn the region into a magnet for global LNG traders including Jera, which currently has projects in countries including the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia.



Tesla's China shipments drop for the eighth time in 10 months

Bloomberg
Hong Kong

Tesla Inc's China factory shipments resumed their decline last month, adding weight to expectations the Elon Musk-led carmaker faces a challenging final quarter for global sales.

The company shipped 61,497 vehicles from its Shanghai plant in October, down almost 10% from a year earlier, according to preliminary data from China's Passenger Car Association. Wholesales from the factory have fallen in eight of 10 months this year.

Tesla shares have risen 16% this year as of the close Monday, roughly in line with the advance in the S&P 500 Index.

Tesla's momentum appears to be fading globally after a record quarter of vehicle deliveries. The China figures follow several European countries reporting steep drops in Tesla's new-vehicle registrations last month, and electric vehicle demand is expected to slump in the US following the expiration of up to $7,500 federal tax credits.

The carmaker recently introduced new versions of its top-selling models priced under $40,000 in an effort to buoy sales. But the stripped-down iterations of the Model 3 sedan and Model Y sport utility vehicle offer less battery range and lack features including ambient interior lighting and a second-row screen.

Chinese carmakers had a mixed October. Whereas Zhejiang Leapmotor Technology Co and Geely Auto managed new monthly sales records, BYD Co posted another drop and slipped to No 2 in the market for a second consecutive month.

Total new-energy vehicle sales in China rose 16% to 1.61mn units, according to the PCA. The final months of the year are typically among the busiest for automakers in China as they push to meet their annual sales targets.

Tesla is on course for another annual decline in global sales. The carmaker is forecast to sell 1.64mn vehicles, with around 444,100 deliveries in the fourth quarter, according to estimates compiled by Bloomberg.

Energy leaders see strong demand ahead, warn on investment gaps

Reuters
Abu Dhabi

There are good signs for healthy oil demand going into 2026, energy industry leaders said on Monday at the ADIPEC energy conference in Abu Dhabi, after Opec+ decided to pause output increases in the first quarter of next year.

When asked about the possibility of an oil glut in 2026, the United Arab Emirates' Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazrouei said: "I am not going to talk about an oversupply scenario," adding that "I think all of what we are seeing is more demand."

Opec secretary-general said at the same event that there are good signs for demand and that surprises are not expected in the market.

"We are making sure we maintain the supply-demand balance," Haitham al-Ghais said of Sunday's Opec+ decision.

Opec+ countries, which include the UAE, agreed to increase December output targets, but halted the increases in the first quarter of 2026 to moderate plans to regain market share on fears of a supply glut.

New Western sanctions on Opec+ member Russia are adding to the challenges, as Moscow may struggle to further raise output after the US and Britain imposed fresh measures on top producers Rosneft and Lukoil.

UAE Minister of Energy Suhail Mohamed Faraj al-Mazrouei speaks at the annual energy industry event Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference in Abu Dhabi on Monday.

Al-Ghais said that while the group has been consistently returning barrels to the market, it still has the flexibility 'to alter, pause, or reverse' its decisions.

Opec+, which pumps about half of the world's oil, has been unwinding voluntary cuts, after cutting back production for several years to support the market.

Oil demand growth is seen at 1.3mn bpd this year, al-Ghais said, adding that a peak in oil demand would not be seen any time soon.

The last element of the cuts for the whole group is meant to stay in place until the end of 2026. Eight Opec+ members will meet again on November 30, the same day as a full Opec+ meeting.

Al-Mazrouei said Opec+ is trying to achieve balance, but investments are needed because artificial intelligence and data centres require more energy.

"There is a requirement for more energy... and we need to make sure the environment for investment is allowed to do that," he said. "If we're not achieving a balance between the price and what you would require, we will not have (a sufficient flow of investment) to do it." '

UAE oil firm Adnoc's chief executive said volatility became a constant due to geopolitics and near-term uncertainty was real. But long-term demand remained strong, he said, adding that oil demand would stay above 100mn barrels a day beyond 2040.

"While we may face headwinds in the months ahead, the long-term outlook shows demand growth for every form of energy across every market," Sultan al-Jaber said.

He said that cost discipline needed to be balanced with capital investment.

Electricity demand will keep surging through 2040 as the power required by data centres continues to grow, but a shortage of gas turbines is turning a supply crunch into a "choke point" that is sending electricity prices higher, al-Jaber said.

The capital is available but needs to be de-risked, al-Jaber added, saying the right structures need to be in place to ensure the flows are going where they are needed.

He added that "dormant capital" tied up in existing energy infrastructure needs to be freed up.

BP CEO expects non-Opec+ oil supply growth could decline by April

Reuters
Abu Dhabi

Oil supply growth outside Opec+ could decline by April, while demand remains robust, BP's Chief Executive Murray Auchincloss said on Monday.

"There is a supply increase that's come outside of Opec+," Auchincloss said. "We think that finishes in about February, March, April, and then it's likely that we see flat to declining production after that time period outside of Opec+." Future oil prices will depend on three factors: Opec+ decisions, Chinese stockpiling and the impact of sanctions, Auchincloss said at the ADIPEC energy conference in Abu Dhabi.

"It's a pretty serious sanctions environment right now, which is dampening supply," he said.

Despite short-term uncertainty, he remains optimistic about long-term demand, citing growth from aviation and petrochemicals.

The comments come after Opec+ — the group of oil-producing nations including Saudi Arabia and Russia — on Sunday agreed a small oil output increase for December and a pause in increases in the first quarter of next year as the producers' group moderates plans to regain market share due to rising fears of a supply glut. Oil prices have dropped about 13% this year.

Auchincloss said he sees a long-term case for investment in oil and the industry has to expand in places such as Abu Dhabi, Iraq and Libya to keep up with demand growth.

TotalEnergies CEO Patrick Pouyanne said annual oil demand growth was rising steadily at around 1%. He said China's oil demand growth has slowed to around 300,000 from 600,000 barrels per day five years ago, but India is emerging as a new driver with 200,000 barrels per day in growth.

Both executives, who spoke on the same panel, emphasised the need for continued investment.

"Opec is unwinding part of its capacity, so the quicker they unwind the quarter, the less they will have spare capacity," Pouyanne said. "We could face a situation with a lower price, less investment, less spare capacity, and then prices will go up again."

Bloomberg QuickTake Q&A

Trump wants more US nuclear weapons tests: What does that mean?

By Gerry Doyle

US President Donald Trump has said he's instructed the Defense Department to start testing nuclear weapons "on an equal basis" with rivals such as Russia and China.

It's unclear whether he means detonating nuclear warheads, which would reverse decades of American policy and violate a de facto global ban, or a scale-up of something the country already does: testing weapons delivery systems, such as intercontinental ballistic missiles, that can carry nuclear warheads.

A return to explosive nuclear testing isn't a new idea in Trump's orbit. Senior officials reportedly considered the move during his first term in office, and last summer, Robert O'Brien, who served as Trump's national security adviser from 2019-2021, made a public push for the US to resume full-scale live tests to "maintain technical and numerical superiority" over Russia and China's combined nuclear stockpiles.

Trump has framed his new directive as a response to other nations' testing programs. His comments followed Russia announcing successful trials of a cruise missile and torpedo drone, both of which are capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and run on atomic energy. Neither test involved a nuclear explosion.

When did the US last conduct test detonations of its nuclear weapons?

The US hasn't tested the explosion of a nuclear weapon since 1992, when then-president George H W Bush ordered a moratorium. It instead relies on proven designs, advanced computer simulations and so-called subcritical experiments that stop short of detonating a warhead.

Russia's last known nuclear test detonation was also more than 30 years ago, in 1990, while China's was in 1996. Together with the US, they're signatories to an international agreement banning nuclear weapons tests: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was negotiated in the early 1990s and made open for signature in 1996.

While none of the trio have ratified the deal, meaning it technically hasn't entered into force, they still observe its terms — as do nuclear-armed states such as India and Pakistan that haven't signed the treaty. The only nation known to have tested nuclear warhead designs this century is North Korea, which last detonated a device in 2017.

Are live tests of nuclear weapons necessary?

Nuclear devices require precise timing, temperature, pressure and materials. During their early development, physical testing helped scientists understand these different variables, as well as how much damage the weapons can inflict on a target and the levels of radiation and heat they produce.

The first test detonation was conducted in the New Mexico desert in 1945 as part of the Manhattan Project. This preceded the Americans dropping atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II.

For decades afterward, developers around the world used remote testing sites to determine whether new designs worked and could deliver the expected amount of explosive power. Aside from providing technical data, the demonstrations were also seen as a projection of military strength.

The most modern US nuclear weapon is the B61-13 air-dropped bomb. The B61 series dates back to the 1960s and was updated over the decades through additional testing. But technological advancements mean the latest iteration was developed using computer simulations and data from previous tests, without a live test explosion.

A return to full-scale nuclear detonation testing in the US would take several years and cost hundreds of millions of dollars, said Daryl G Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association.

What risks could come with a restart of nuclear weapons testing?

Should the US resume testing activity, it could potentially trigger another nuclear arms race — and not just among superpowers — undermining decades of non-proliferation initiatives. Russia has said that if the US defies the global ban, it will "act accordingly." Trump's cryptic comments about testing come at a precarious time for nuclear diplomacy and contradict his previous calls for denuclearisation. The New START Treaty between the US and Russia, which limits their numbers of deployed strategic warheads, is due to expire in February.

Russia has the world's largest stockpile of nuclear weapons, with about 4,300 deployed and stored warheads, followed by the US, whose inventory stands at 3,700, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. China is a distant third, possessing 600 warheads, although US intelligence has warned that the country is rapidly expanding that arsenal.

Who would benefit from a resumption of nuclear weapons testing?

Annual assessments conducted by directors of the US national nuclear laboratories and the commander of US Strategic Command say the country's nuclear stockpile is safe, reliable and effective, and there's no technical reason to return to explosive testing.

Between them, the US and Russia carried out nearly 2,000 nuclear weapons tests from the 1940s to 1990s and have enormous amounts of data to work with already, said William Alberque, a Europe-based senior fellow at the Pacific Forum. If the US were to revive its testing activity, this would "open the door for China to resume testing, and they're the only one of the Big Five that has a need for new test data." The Big Five refers to countries officially recognised as nuclear-armed states under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Russia, the US, China, France and the UK.

Three other states — India, Pakistan and North Korea — acknowledge having nuclear weapons; Israel is widely believed to have them as well but has never confirmed or denied its arsenal.

How were nuclear weapons tested in the past?

The earliest tests were carried out in the open air, either detonated on towers over land or dropped from aircraft. These atmospheric tests produced valuable information about the weapons, such as the size of the "fireball" of extremely hot, rapidly expanding gas, and the amount of radioactive fallout generated by the blast.

But there were serious environmental and public health dangers, particularly as wind and rain spread radioactive particles to populated areas. The Castle Bravo test on Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands in 1954 was the largest test detonation conducted by the US, producing more than double the expected explosive power. It was also the worst radioactive disaster in American testing history as the fallout contaminated a much wider area than anticipated. Mounting safety concerns culminated in the international Partial Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1963, which prohibited above-ground and underwater testing. The last atmospheric US and Russian tests were in 1962, while for China, which didn't sign this treaty, its final test was in 1980.

Underground testing was mostly conducted by excavating a cavity deep below the surface and detonating the warhead in the middle of that space to contain the heat, pressure and fallout. This method also offers more secrecy, making it more difficult for adversaries to analyse the fireball.

While safer than atmospheric testing, the underground setting still carried the risk of soil and groundwater contamination. There also were some accidents, such as during France's Beryl test in Algeria in 1962, when hot gases and radioactive material spewed from the side of the mountain where the trial took place.

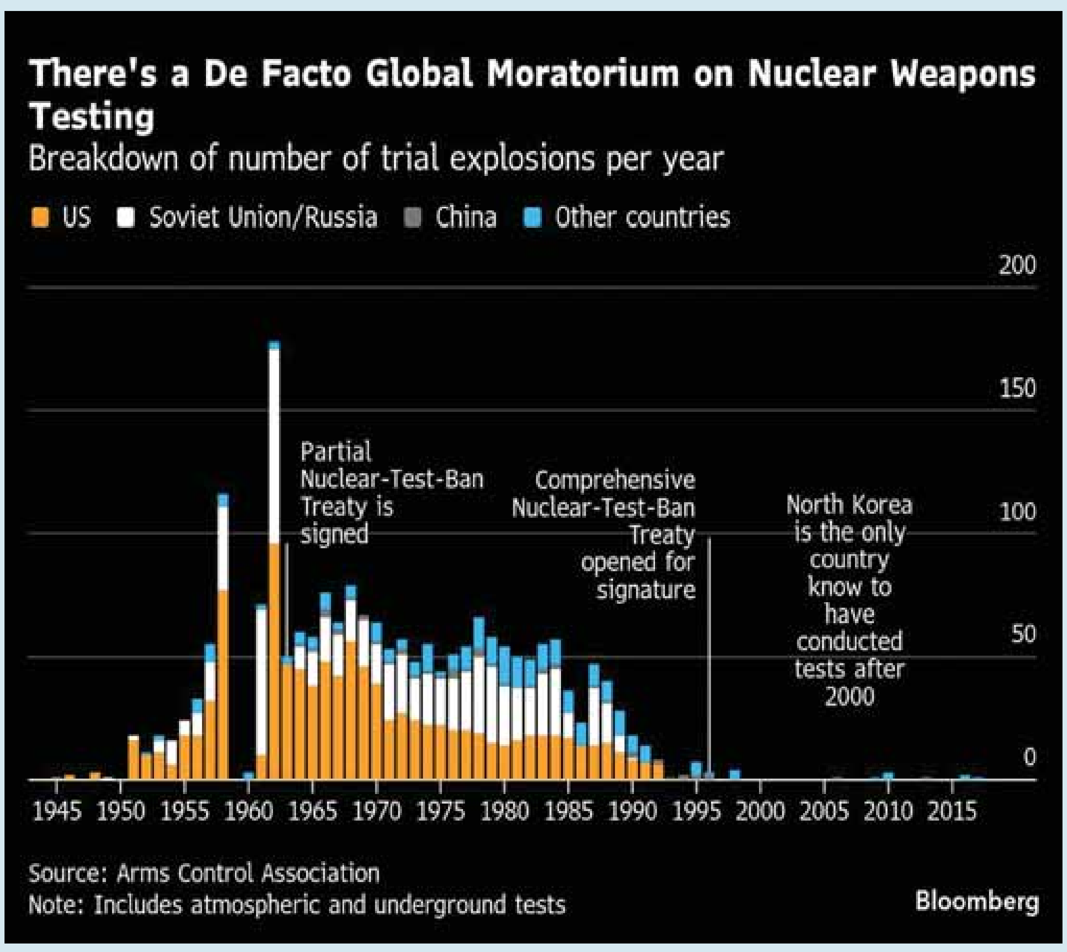
What's the concern about the weapons Russia has been testing recently?

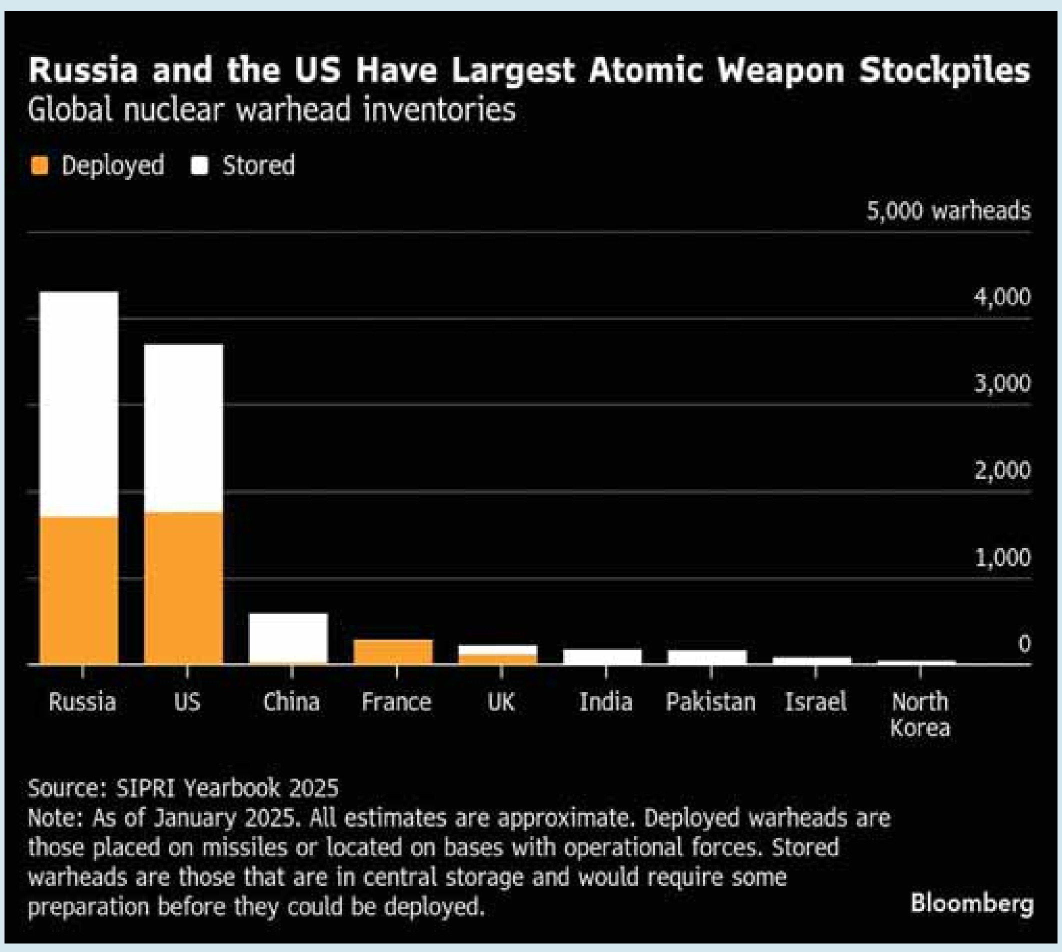
The 9M730 Burevestnik cruise missile is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and is powered by an atomic reactor, relying on a fission reaction — the splitting of atoms to release energy — as the core of a ramjet. This gives the missile nearly unlimited range. In October, Russia said the Burevestnik had successfully test flown for about 15 hours, covering around 14,000 kilometres (8,699 miles).

Although the Russians designed the weapon to bypass air and missile defences, it's not clear whether the Burevestnik is any more capable of doing that than conventional cruise missiles, according to Jeffrey Lewis, a nuclear arms expert at the Middlebury Institute of Strategic Studies in California.

The US has sensitive satellites in geostationary orbit that form the Space-Based Infrared System that can detect missile launches anywhere on Earth, as well as conventional air defences designed to shoot down cruise missiles. This year, Trump directed the US military to develop and deploy the Golden Dome system, which is meant to defeat any aerial threat against the country.

"This is ultimately what is so stupid about arms races," Lewis said. "There isn't any victory at the end. It's just a process of one side building systems, the other side building systems in response, and so on. Everyone ends up in exactly the same place they started, just at great expense."





CORPORATE RESULTS

Aramco third-quarter profit slips on lower crude prices

Saudi Arabia's Aramco, the world's top oil exporter, reported a 2.3% fall in quarterly profit on Tuesday, citing a drop in crude and product prices, but its performance improved from the previous quarter as oil production rose.

The kingdom has been pumping more crude as Opec+ unwinds voluntary production cuts after several years of cutting back to support the market.

In October, crude oil futures fell for a third consecutive month, dropping more than 2% and hitting a five-month low, on fears of a supply glut and US tariff concerns.

Aramco reported net profit of 101.02bn riyals ($26.94bn) in the three-month period ended on September 30, down from 103.4bn riyals last year. However, net profit was up around 19% compared to the second quarter as revenues rose due to higher volumes and prices for both crude oil and refined and chemical products.

"Our rule of thumb is that every 1mn barrels per day of additional crude oil production translates into an additional $11bn of annual operating cash flow based on 2025 average prices year-to-date," Aramco CFO Ziad al-Murshed told analysts.

The company's total hydrocarbon production was 13.27mn barrels of oil equivalent per day (boepd) in the third quarter, compared to 12.8mn boepd the previous quarter. On Sunday, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies, known as Opec+, agreed to a small oil output increase for December and a pause in increases in the first quarter of next year, in what some investors saw as a signal of oversupply in the market.

Adjusted net profit, which does not include non-recurring items, at Aramco came in at $28bn during the third quarter, beating a company-provided median analyst estimate of $26.5bn.

Aramco's shares rose by up to 1.1% after the earnings were published and closed up 0.7% at 25.76 riyals apiece.

Aramco on Tuesday raised its 2030 sales gas production capacity growth target to about 80% above 2021 levels, up from its earlier goal of more than 60%. This increase is expected to bring total gas and associated liquids production to around 6mn boepd, Aramco said citing the expected contribution of its Jafurah field, which is central to Saudi Arabia's ambitions to become a major global player in natural gas.

"As we develop our plans, we see (gas) demand growth increasing more than previously forecasted, including higher demand from additional uses such as AI data centres," CEO Amin Nasser said in the call with analysts.

JPMorgan analysts said in a note that the upgraded guidance translated into a material increase of over 500,000 boepd.

Aramco confirmed $21.3bn in total dividends for the third quarter, about $200mn of which is performance-linked.

The dividends, which will be about one-third lower this year, are a critical source of income for the Saudi Arabian government, which owns 81.5% of Aramco shares directly and another 16% through its sovereign wealth fund PIF.

The kingdom has invested billions to diversify its economy away from oil, which still generated 62% of government revenue last year.

Free cash flow for the third quarter jumped 55% to $23.6bn from the previous three months, Aramco said, citing higher net cash from operating activities coupled with steady capital expenditures.

The cash flow figure is only $2.3bn higher than the company's total dividend payout for the quarter. Total borrowing rose to $95.1bn as of September 30 from $80.9bn a year earlier, with Aramco raising $5bn from a bond in May and a further $3bn from a sale of Islamic bonds in September. Gearing was 6.3%, from 1.9% at the end of September 2024.

Pfizer

Pfizer reported a drop in third-quarter profits Tuesday as lower sales of Covid-19 products more than offset gains in other medications.

Profits were $3.5bn, down 21% from the year-ago period. Revenues dipped 6% to $16.7bn.

The big US drugmaker, which has been navigating a significant drop in coronavirus-related revenues, pointed to lower Covid-19 infections across the US and internationally, compared with the year-ago period.

Pfizer also experienced a 20% fall in its vaccine revenues after US officials in the Trump administration narrowed guidance for getting the jabs in the US.

Under Health and Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy, Trump's administration has recommended that for people aged five through 64, only those with higher-risk conditions get a Covid vaccine.

Lower sales in Covid-related products were partially compensated for by gains in other products. These include Eliquis, which is used to treat blood clots, and migraine drug Nurtec.

Pfizer confirmed its full-year revenue forecast and raised somewhat its profit outlook.

But Pfizer profits were also dented by a $1.35bn charge related to an agreement with 3SBio for exclusive rights to commercialise a cancer medication undergoing trials in China.

Pfizer is embroiled in a takeover battle with Novo Nordisk for the purchase of obesity treatment maker Metsera. The Danish pharmaceutical giant last week announced an unsolicited bid for Metsera that topped Pfizer's $4.9bn merger agreement.

Telefonica

Shares in Spanish telecoms giant Telefonica fell sharply on Tuesday after it posted a net loss for the first nine months of the year and announced it would cut its dividend by half in 2026.

The company booked a net loss of €1.08bn ($1.2bn) between January and September, compared with a profit of €954mn during the same period last year, weighed down by losses linked to asset sales in Latin America.

Net profit in the third quarter fell to a lower-than-expected €217mn from €493mn in the same period last year due to one-off impairment charges on its Telefonica Tech unit, the company said in a statement.

Telefonica said it would cut its dividend by half next year to 15 cents per share as part of a new five-year strategic plan as it seeks to reduce its debt.

The company said it expects to achieve up to €2.3bn in savings in 2028, and €3.0bn by 2030, through "streamlined processes, digital transformation, and the sale of legacy network assets".

"Telefonica's results continue to point to a weak business environment in a highly competitive sector, with limited short-term catalysts for a turnaround," Javier Cabrera, analyst at trading platform XTB, wrote in a note. "Telefonica's underperformance is not solely a reflection of the company itself, but also of the broader European telecom landscape." The dividend cut was hurting the company's share price but is a "necessary step" as it will "alleviate a significant financial burden" and free up funds than can be used to grow the business, Cabrera said.

Philips

Dutch electronics and medical device manufacturer Philips reported a slight gain in third-quarter net profits on Tuesday as it battles tariff uncertainty and ongoing litigation over faulty sleep apnoea machines.

The firm banked €187mn in net profits in the third quarter, compared with €181mn it registered in the same period in 2024.

In the second quarter of this year, Philips had posted profits of €240mn.

"In this quarter we maintained our momentum," chief executive Roy Jakobs said in a statement.

Traders welcomed the results, pushing the stock sharply higher at the opening bell.

In the third quarter, sales came in at €4.3bn, the same as during the second quarter.

Orders were up 8%, driven by what the firm said was "sustained double-digit growth" in the US.

Philips continues to battle legal difficulties over a 2021 recall of DreamStation machines for sleep apnoea, a disorder in which breathing intermittently stops during sleep.

It recalled millions of machines over concerns users were at risk of inhaling or swallowing pieces of toxic sound-absorbing foam and fears it could potentially cause cancer.

The firm agreed in 2024 to pay $1.1bn to settle US lawsuits related to the recall, although it did not acknowledge liability.

In September, sources close to the case told AFP that a magistrate in France was looking into whether Philips committed aggravated fraud in relation to the machines.

The Paris prosecutor's office confirmed to AFP that it had received 104 complaints from individuals, two from associations, as well as an alert from France's medical device regulator.

Philips said that probe, opened in June, concerned its actions during the 2021 recall and had no bearing on the quality of its current machines.

In July, Philips said it expected a hit of between €150mn and €200mn this year from US tariffs.

Ryanair

Irish no-frills airline Ryanair on Monday announced a rise in net profit for its second quarter on increased ticket prices.

Profit after tax jumped to €1.7bn ($2bn) compared with €1.4bn one year earlier, the Dublin-based carrier said in a statement.

The group expects full-year traffic to increase more than 3% to 207mn passengers due to earlier-than-expected Boeing plane deliveries and strong first-half demand.

Delays to Boeing aircraft delivery had caused Ryanair to cut its passenger growth target in the past year.

Revenue jumped 8% to around €5.5bn.

Fares increased 13% in the first half of its fiscal year, thanks in part to a favourable timing of Easter holidays in its first quarter.

Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary said the company expects to "recover all of last year's seven-percent full-year fare decline".

He added that Ryanair forecasts "reasonable net profit growth" in its 2026 fiscal year.

The company said it has switched more capacity this winter to regions "cutting aviation taxes and incentivising traffic growth", such as Sweden, Slovakia, Italy, Albania and Morocco.

BP

British energy giant BP on Tuesday reported a sharp rise in net profit for the third quarter as higher oil output and cost-cutting helped offset a drop in crude prices.

Profit after tax jumped to $1.16bn for the July-September period, compared with $206mn in the third quarter of 2024, BP said in an earnings statement.

Stripping out exceptional items, underlying net profit dipped but beat analysts' forecasts.

"We continue to make good progress to cut costs, strengthen our balance sheet and increase cash flow and returns," said chief executive Murray Auchincloss.

"There is much more to do but we are moving at pace, and demonstrating that BP can and will do better for our investors," he added.

In February, BP launched a major pivot back to its more profitable oil and gas business, shelving its once industry-leading targets on reducing carbon emissions and slashing clean energy investment.

However, energy prices have come under pressure this year on concerns that US President Donald Trump's tariffs will hurt economic growth, while Opec+ nations have produced more oil.

British rival Shell last week reported a jump in third-quarter net profit as trading margins and sales volumes improved.

France's TotalEnergies also posted soaring net profit, while US oil giants ExxonMobil and Chevron both reported lower earnings.

As for BP, its latest quarter benefited from higher oil and gas production and improved refining margins.

The company said it expects divestments for the full year to be higher than forecast, as it looks to simplify its business and boost performance.

That comes after BP on Monday announced that it had agreed to sell stakes in certain US shale assets for $1.5bn.

"The back-to-basics mantra is sticking," said Derren Nathan, head of equity research at Hargreaves Lansdown.

Big Tech earnings reveal cracks in case for massive AI spending

Bloomberg
New York

A week that saw the Federal Reserve cut interest rates and dozens of US companies report earnings nevertheless boiled down to a single theme: Artificial intelligence (AI).

Results from US technology giants showed that the world's biggest corporations are still pouring billions into AI infrastructure, cheering investors and bolstering the case for betting on the technology. The S&P 500 Index and Nasdaq 100 both advanced for the week and are hovering near fresh records.

Yet traders were also quick to punish companies whose expenditures weren't showing enough of a near-term reward — a shift in the once-relentless optimism around AI spending.

Worries over massive outlays at Facebook-parent Meta Platforms Inc sent the company's shares on their biggest daily drop in three years. Microsoft Corp fell more than 4% in two days after revenue growth in its cloud-computing business failed to impress investors. "We're starting to see, in some cases, a discipline check that investors are putting on companies," said Kevin Gordon, head of macro research and strategy at Charles Schwab & Co. "At some point we will have to have some proof about what return can come from this investment."

By contrast, investors were more sanguine about big spending at Amazon.com Inc and Alphabet Inc. Accelerating growth at Amazon Web Services helped send the company's stock up nearly 10% on Friday, despite a big jump in capital expenditures.

Google-parent Alphabet rallied 2.5% on Thursday, fuelled by surging demand for its cloud and AI services.

Here are four key things we learned last week.

Revenue growth: AI spending alone is unlikely to satisfy investors, who are now laser-focused on revenue growth.

Take the contrasting reactions to Big Tech earnings over the past week: Alphabet and Amazon executives pledged to pour more money into AI infrastructure but also demonstrated how past outlays were already showing results. Alphabet said third-quarter revenue from products built on its generative AI models more than tripled from a year ago, while Google Cloud sales expanded about 34% to $15.2bn, beating analyst estimates.

Meanwhile, Amazon reassured investors with robust cloud growth, while Chief Executive Officer Andy Jassy revealed new details on AI-related ventures, including expectations that its shopping chatbot will help drive an additional $10bn in annual sales.

Meta — which doesn't have a cloud computing business to show off AI-fuelled revenue growth — found it harder to placate Wall Street's spending worries, even as CEO Mark Zuckerberg touted AI-related improvements in ad-targeting and engagement and made a case for building excess capacity. "This is the first quarter we've seen where more capex wasn't uniformly rewarded," said Allen Bond, portfolio manager at Jensen Investment Management. "There's more focus on return on invested capital."

Green light: That said, many investors saw the commitments from the industry's biggest spenders as a green light for the sweeping AI trade that has galvanised broad swaths of the market this year, from semiconductors to electricity providers.

Perhaps the most obvious beneficiary has been Nvidia Corp, whose chips dominate the market for AI computing. Its shares surged almost 9% this week, making it the first company to reach a market value of $5tn.

There were plenty of other AI-related gainers. Strong forecasts boosted shares of Seagate Technology Holdings Inc and Western Digital Corp.

Server manufacturer Super Micro Computer Inc and chipmaker Broadcom Inc each rose more than 4% for the week. Even Caterpillar Inc, the heavy-duty machinery company that's benefiting from a boom in data centre construction, jumped 10%.

Shares of Apple Inc, which spends less on AI than other megacaps, rose around 2.9% for the week despite mixed earnings.

Earnings beat: Big Tech companies as a whole delivered earnings growth that outpaced Wall Street estimates, providing a measure of comfort for investors who had grown nervous over a richly valued stock market. With earnings reports now in from six of the so-called Magnificent Seven, which also includes Tesla Inc, quarterly profit growth is tracking at about 27% for the group, compared with the 15% expansion anticipated before the reporting season started, according to data compiled by Bloomberg Intelligence.

The S&P 500, by contrast, is on pace for 13% earnings growth, with results in from more than half of the benchmark's constituents.

Final boss: While this week's earnings reports provided a lot to like for the AI trade, investors will have to wait three more weeks to hear from what is the industry's biggest bellwether — Nvidia.

The maker of graphics processing units used in AI computing is scheduled to report on November 19 and expectations are high — especially after Chief Executive Officer Jensen Huang gave a strong outlook for growth at an event in Washington, DC this week. Given the company's central role in the industry, any disappointments in its results could ripple widely.

For now, however, investors are enjoying the ride.

Norway wealth fund to oppose Musk's $1tn Tesla pay deal

Reuters
Oslo

Norway's sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest, said yesterday it would vote against ratifying Tesla CEO Elon Musk's proposed compensation package that is potentially worth $1tn at an annual general meeting later this week. Investors in the electric-vehicle maker will decide on November 6 whether to approve the package, likely the largest-ever CEO compensation agreement. Critics have called the pay deal excessive but face an uphill fight to block it.

Tesla's board is pushing for shareholders to approve the plan , with Chair Robyn Denholm warning that Musk could leave the $1.5tn market cap firm if the deal is rejected. Opponents worry that it will give Musk too much unchecked power.

Musk's new trillion-dollar pay package will almost certainly pass, given broad investor support. Laws in Texas, where Tesla moved its headquarters last year, also allow Musk to vote his own large stake, giving him some 13.5% of voting power.

The Norwegian wealth fund is the largest investor so far to say how it plans to vote. The next-largest to do so, Baron Capital, plans to back Musk's pay package. Tesla's largest institutional investors, including BlackRock, Vanguard and State Street, have yet to disclose their voting plans.

Proxy advisers ISS and Glass Lewis have both urged shareholders to reject Musk's compensation plan, arguing it would be too large, deliver high payouts even if the CEO only meets some goals and could dilute the holdings of other investors. Both also opposed a shareholder vote last year on a 2018 $56bn package for Musk that passed with overwhelming support from Tesla's army of mom-and-pop investors.

While the package could grant stock worth up to $1tn over 10 years, the cost of those shares at the time of the award will be deducted, making the value to Musk slightly lower, at up to $878bn, according to a Reuters analysis.

"While we appreciate the significant value created under Musk's visionary role, we are concerned about the total size of the award, dilution, and lack of mitigation of key person risk – consistent with our views on executive compensation," Norges Bank Investment Management said on its website.

The fund, Tesla's seventh-biggest owner with a 1.12% stake worth $17bn, also voted "no" to Musk's previous compensation plan, drawing a sharp response from the CEO, who turned down an invitation to a conference in Oslo.

NBIM on Tuesday also said it would vote against two out of three Tesla directors who are up for re-election, declining to back board veterans Kathleen Wilson-Thompson and Ira Ehrenpreis while supporting Joe Gebbia, who joined in 2022.

The $2.1tn Norwegian fund also said it would vote against Tesla's proposed general stock compensation plan, which is intended for all employees and can also be used by the board to benefit Musk.

Tesla says its CEO would earn "nothing" unless the company's market value grows substantially and that the maximum award is only paid if the group reaches several milestones, most notably a market value of $8.5tn, a near six-fold increase.

Inflation set to remain close to 2% for next two years, says ECB official

Bloomberg
Frankfurt


Martin Kocher, Governing Council member of the European Central Bank.

European Central Bank (ECB) Governing Council member Martin Kocher said recent economic reports have improved a little and inflation is set to remain close to 2% for the next two years.

Speaking a day after third-quarter output numbers for the eurozone came in higher than anticipated, the Austrian central-bank chief reiterated that the ECB is in a "good place" that may even have improved.

"If anything, some of the data we have been getting since the last monetary-policy meeting in September have turned to the slightly better," he told Bloomberg Television on Friday.

The remarks follow the ECB's decision to leave its deposit rate at 2% for a third straight meeting, with President Christine Lagarde saying she and her colleagues "will do whatever is needed to make sure that we stay in a good place."

Most officials have signalled little appetite to add to the eight quarter-point reductions delivered through June, with inflation near the 2% target and the economy continuing to grow. Some, however, don't want further cuts to be excluded.

A report later Friday for the 20-nation eurozone showed a slight moderation in consumer-price growth in October, to 2.1%. Data Thursday revealed third-quarter gross domestic product rose 0.2% – exceeding the expectations of analysts and the ECB.

Indexes of purchasing managers for this month also surpassed estimates.

Repeating earlier comments, Kocher said rates could go in either direction next. "Both a cut and a hike are likely or not likely at all," he said.

His Estonian counterpart, Madis Muller, also acknowledged that "the economic situation has gradually improved," adding that the current level of rates is "appropriate".

On inflation, Kocher expressed confidence that price gains will remain in check for the next two years, saying "we are close to the target." Beyond that, he played down the significance of new forecasts due in December for 2028.

"The 2028 projection is of course a projection that is far out into the future," he said, describing uncertainty as still very high. "So putting too much weight on this projection, on this single data point, I think would not be appropriate."

Latvian central-bank chief Martins Kazaks echoed that sentiment.

"The 2028 forecast will be very important to look at, to see where inflation dynamics are going, but I would not overestimate the importance," he said in an interview. "Uncertainty remains high and is unlikely to disappear, so forecasts will come with a very large margin of error."

Finland's Olli Rehn highlighted that "it made sense to wait for new data and, in particular, our comprehensive economic forecast in December."

Writing in a blog post, Rehn — who is in the running to become the ECB's next vice president — said that recent data point to "sluggish but persistent growth in the euro area".

He warned, however, that the impact of tariffs remains uncertain, though he added that "it appears that the main forces at play are mostly dampening" consumer prices.

Kocher said risks for inflation are "quite balanced" but that "it's clear that things might change".

Speaking earlier on Friday, Lithuanian central-bank chief Gediminas Simkus wouldn't commit to what may happen next.

"If we look at the medium term, the projected indicators are aligned with the 2% target, and this is the main reason why the interest rate remains unchanged," he told LRT in a radio interview. "Markets are currently not expecting a significant change — I myself will refrain from making an assessment."

AI rally and volatility define stock run since Trump's return

Bloomberg
New York

Donald Trump's re-election was supposed to deliver a booming stock market. It's done that, just not for the reasons prognosticators anticipated.

The S&P 500 Index has surged 18% since Trump's November 5 win, ending October on a six-month winning streak and at an all-time high. The run started on expectations an economic boom would follow Trump's plan to slash taxes and regulations.

While he has largely delivered the cuts, his attempts at a wholesale re-write of US trade policies, often in fits and starts, are the market narrative he's most responsible for. Tariff threats and walkbacks have sent a measure of policy uncertainty to the highest since 1900, and equity volatility has episodically spiked, most notably in April when Trump unveiled the harshest levies in 90 years.

"This was one of the most dramatic explosions of market volatility we've really ever seen," said Dean Curnutt, CEO and founder of Macro Risk Advisors LLC.

If not for another bout of artificial intelligence euphoria, the stock market's advance would be far more muted. Big Tech accounts for a big chunk of the gains, while old-line industrial firms and sellers of consumer products have languished amid tariffs and a slowing economy.

A version of the S&P 500 that strips out market-cap bias is up just 5.2% in the year, underscoring the impact of Big Tech and AI. The median stock in the index has notched a gain of just 1.2%.

Aside from a January blip around China's DeepSeek week, AI euphoria has minted Nvidia Corp as the first $5tn company and pushed Apple Inc and Alphabet Inc past $4tn. The seven biggest tech companies account for more than half of the market's advance.

"I feel like we've all jumped on the AI trade," said Alonso Munoz, chief investment officer at Hamilton Capital Partners LLC, describing investors' belief that the technology is in the early stages of "leapfrogging into more advancements," and leaving other segments of the market behind.

He sold off investments in more defensive sectors in April during the turmoil, to buy bigger stakes in AI-related firms, including Alphabet.

While the AI rally tore ahead, policy-fomented volatility continued to flare, largely around tariff threats. Trump also sparked rallies and routs in individual companies and industries.

He resuscitated Intel Corp's shares by getting the company to give the US a 10% stake in return for what had been a grant.

The US demanded an ownership slice of US Steel for a deal approval. It bought equity in small mining companies deemed vital to national security, lifting what had been a tiny sector.

His jawboning around Federal Reserve policy, and attempts to fire one official, also stoked volatility. For Curnutt, the repeated turbulence can start to take its toll on the market, like an edifice weakened by consistent rattling.

"My concern is markets are not anti-fragile. There's not so much that you can throw at some of these markets where they can just tolerate the uncertainty," Curnutt said.

Still, a 18% gain since the election is, by most measures, excellent. By several others, it's lacklustre. The prior 12-month period delivered a gain of 36%. US stocks rank just 54th globally in the past year, trailing Canada, Japan and Germany among others.

And stacked against the first year following a presidential election in the past eight decades, this one ranks just eighth — behind Joe Biden (first place), Barack Obama (fifth) and Bill Clinton (second), according to data from CFRA. Franklin Roosevelt's final term ranks third, with Trump's first stint seventh.

Consumer stocks in particular have struggled. To wit, Chipotle Mexcian Grill Inc shares plunged last week and the company sounded alarms over a diner pullback.

The staples sector has also fallen over the last year as tariffs are seen impacting margins.

A similar challenge is playing out in the market's worst-performing sector, materials, which is down 8% and struggling as they pay more for inputs for chemicals from global trading partners, especially China.

Nevertheless, the AI buoyancy has made it "impossible not to be in the US stock market," Curnutt said, noting that its size, liquidity, rate of participation by all investor sizes and growth prospects have kept traders coming back despite risks and volatility.

And there are signs that Trump's trade-fuelled turbulence is starting to ease after his Asia trip netted accommodations from a host of countries.

Qatar's leadership in shaping the region's global relevance

By Leigh Gilmore

When the world gathers in Doha each spring for the 'Qatar Economic Forum, Powered by Bloomberg' (QEF), it is more than a conference. It has become a marker of how Qatar is positioning itself as a bridge between regions and a host of conversations that carry weight well beyond the Gulf.

The 2025 edition underscored this in striking fashion. More than 2,500 leaders from 95 countries, including 1,500 C-suite executives, gathered in Doha. Online, the Forum reached over 200mn views, with tens of thousands of executives tuning in live on LinkedIn. When headline speakers such as Elon Musk and Mary Callahan Erdoes chose Doha as their stage, their conversations did not only touch on Gulf priorities, they helped steer the global economic agenda.

Every year, the Qatar Economic Forum leans into its position as the Middle East's only editorially led economic forum to deliver one of the world's most impactful convenings.

What makes QEF distinctive is not only its scale but also its outcomes. In 2025, leaders held 234 bilateral meetings and 79 closed-door sessions, resulting in 21 memorandums of understanding. For an event that is just five years old, that level of deal-making speaks volumes. It demonstrates the Gulf's rising centrality to global business and Qatar's ability to transform conversations into partnerships.

Qatar has taken the same convening approach across many industries.

The 2022 FIFA World Cup showed the country's ability to host events that capture worldwide attention. Now, anticipation is building for Art Basel Qatar in February 2026 – the first Middle East edition of the renowned fair.

With institutions such as the National Museum of Qatar and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art already magnets for international audiences, Art Basel will add a new dimension to this cultural landscape. Together with QEF, these moments show how business, culture and sport can complement one another to build influence and collaboration that lasts.

That convening power is amplified by Bloomberg's role in powering QEF. Bloomberg Live brings Bloomberg's global news-making authority to life, combining its strengths in journalism, data and media to deliver conversations that matter to decision-makers. The quality of conversations backed by deep industry knowledge, analysis and data is what sets QEF apart from many other global convenings. In this era of economic volatility, geopolitical tension, technological disruption and a widening global trust gap, leaders are not seeking more content; they are searching for clarity, credibility and genuine human connection.

QEF embodies that model, offering intelligence-led convening underpinned by Bloomberg's editorial trust, global reach and deep industry insights.

Looking ahead, the Qatar Economic Forum will return from 12-14 May 2026 with a focus on innovation, sports and economic transformation – topics that resonate deeply with the Gulf's trajectory. The establishment of its Global Advisory Council further institutionalises its role as a convening platform of global consequence.

At a time when markets are unsettled and geopolitical uncertainty is the norm, the ability to bring decision-makers together is essential to global business and government leaders.

Through the Qatar Economic Forum, and alongside its cultural and sporting platforms, Doha has become a stage where global voices gather, and where the region's economic and cultural relevance continues to grow.

■ *Leigh Gilmore is the Global Head of Bloomberg Live.*

Qatar Chamber acting general manager Ali Saeed Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri joins Sheikh Dr Mohammed bin Hamad al-Thani, director of the Department of NCDs Prevention Programmes at the Ministry of Public Health, and Hayat Bayan, commercial and operations director at IFP Qatar, during a recently held press conference to announce the staging of the Qatar International Healthcare and Medical Exhibition and Conference.

'Qatar Medicare' to kick off on November 11, says Qatar Chamber

Qatar Chamber has announced the second edition of the Qatar International Healthcare and Medical Exhibition and Conference (Qatar Medicare), which it is organising in collaboration with IFP Qatar from November 11-13 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

Under the patronage of the Ministry of Public Health, Qatar Medicare is the first international event of its kind in the country, bringing together 100 local and international companies under one roof, 64 local and 36 international exhibitors, including health professionals, hospital representatives, medical service providers, distributors of medical supplies and equipment, technology experts, and investors.

Qatar Chamber acting general manager Ali Saeed Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri said: "Qatar is witnessing rapid progress in its healthcare sector, establishing itself as one of the leading destinations for medical tourism in the Middle East and ranking among the top countries globally in terms of quality healthcare services.

"This event serves as a key platform to forge partnerships, explore avenues for collaboration and investment, and further enhance the sector's growth and appeal. Qatar Chamber remains committed to supporting and stimulating priority sectors, in line with the Third National Development Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030."

Sheikh Dr Mohammed bin Hamad al-Thani, director of the Department of NCDs Prevention Programmes at the Ministry of Public Health, stated: "Qatar has successfully built a world-class healthcare ecosystem, establishing itself as a global hub for healthcare innovation.

"The country is currently implementing the Third National Health Strategy, which focuses on enhancing quality of life and developing a comprehensive, modern healthcare system founded on clinical excellence, sustainability, and innovation."

He added: "This strategy, aligned with the Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030, prioritises maximising the use of existing healthcare infrastructure, attracting new private sector investments, advancing medical tourism, and reinforcing Qatar's position as a global leader in precision medicine."

According to estimates by Fitch Solutions, a subsidiary of Fitch Ratings, Qatar's healthcare sector is projected to experience accelerated growth, with total health expenditure expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 14% by 2029, reaching $11.5bn (QR41.86bn).

This expansion is set to position Qatar as the third-largest healthcare market in the GCC and the tenth-largest in the Mena region.

Hayat Bayan, commercial and operations director at IFP Qatar, said: "This year, the event has attracted extensive international participation from 14 countries, led by a range of prominent global institutions, including the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Unesco, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Labour Organisation, and several other regional and international partners."

Qatar Chamber holds co-ordination meeting with IOE for 'Private Sector Forum'

Qatar Chamber held a co-ordination meeting yesterday with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) to discuss preparations for the 'Private Sector Forum', which will be held as part of the Second World Summit for Social Development, scheduled in Doha until November 6.

The meeting was co-chaired by Engineer Nasser al-Meer, adviser to the chairman of Qatar Chamber for Labour Affairs, and Roberto Suárez Santos, secretary-general of the IOE.

The meeting was co-chaired by Engineer Nasser al-Meer, adviser to the chairman of Qatar Chamber for Labour Affairs, and Roberto Suárez Santos, secretary-general of the IOE.

Also present at the meeting were Mohira Kurbanova, governance officer at the IOE; Hamad Ali al-Marri, director of the Business Committees and Councils Affairs Department at Qatar Chamber; and Al-Anoud al-Mohannadi, director of the Member Affairs Department.

During the meeting, participants discussed the themes and issues to be addressed in the 'Private Sector Forum' as part of the summit's agenda. The discussions focused on aligning the forum's topics with those of the summit, including subjects related to artificial intelligence, the circular economy, and training and supporting innovators aspiring to enter the business world.

For his part, Santos praised the remarkable progress achieved by Qatar in the field of social development, noting that it serves as an inspiring model for many countries around the world.

Qatar Chamber explores trade co-operation with Burkina Faso

Qatar Chamber acting general manager Ali Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri held a meeting yesterday with a trade delegation from Burkina Faso at the chamber's Lusail headquarters.

The delegation, which included representatives from a number of companies operating in the agricultural and commercial sectors, was led by Abdoulaye Sawadogo, chairman of the Nafaso Group, and accompanied by Amidou Coulibaly, chargé d'affaires of the embassy of Burkina Faso in Qatar.

During the meeting, both sides discussed ways to enhance bilateral co-operation between Qatar and Burkina Faso in the fields of trade, agriculture, and the economy, as well as the vital role of the Qatari private sector in promoting trade relations between the two countries.

The meeting also touched on the possibility of signing a memorandum of understanding between Qatar Chamber and the Burkina Faso Chamber of Commerce to strengthen co-operation between the two chambers, create broader opportunities for collaboration between business communities from both countries, and promote mutual investments.

In his remarks, al-Mansouri affirmed the chamber's readiness to co-operate with the Burkinabe side to further develop trade and investment relations between the two nations. He noted that the current level of trade exchange remains below aspirations and emphasised the importance of strengthening the role of the private sector in fostering mutual investments and enhancing trade flows.

Qatar Chamber acting general manager Ali Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri welcomes a trade delegation from Burkina Faso, which included representatives from a number of companies operating in the agricultural and commercial sectors, was led by Abdoulaye Sawadogo, chairman of the Nafaso Group, and accompanied by Amidou Coulibaly, chargé d'affaires of the embassy of Burkina Faso in Qatar.

Qatar Chamber hosts seminar highlighting Qatar's advancements in Quantum computing

Qatar Chamber hosted a seminar on the launch of the Chief Quantum Computing Officer Programme, in co-operation with IBM and Fusion Integrated Solutions, yesterday.

The event was attended by Qatar Chamber chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani, Fusion Group chairman Sheikh Abdularaman bin Hassan al-Thani, Qatar Chamber second vice-chairman Rashid bin Hamad al-Athba, and several Qatar Chamber board members, along with Dr Saif al-Kuwari, director of the Qatar Centre for Quantum Computing.

During the event, Dr al-Kuwari delivered a presentation on the Qatar Centre for Quantum Computing, established in 2023 to develop an integrated ecosystem to advance quantum computing technologies. He explained that the centre aims to strengthen Qatar's position and leadership in this promising field and to support its application across the region. For his part, Muhannad Abdul Jawad, general manager of Fusion Integrated Solutions Qatar, said the quantum computing field is not new to Qatar, noting that Qatar is investing QR2bn in developing the sector, representing two-thirds of the total quantum computing investments in the GCC region.

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Abdul Jawad emphasised that Qatar National Vision 2030 aims to build a diversified, knowledge-based economy, underscoring the importance of developing national talents capable of leading in quantum computing and emerging technologies.

He also noted that quantum computing is a highly specialised domain requiring a deep understanding of computational science. The qualification initiative, he noted, is designed to build capabilities that align with cybersecurity and risk management needs, and to address the challenges facing the adoption of quantum technologies.

Abdul Jawad explained that the programme comprises three key components: Training and qualification for leaders and professionals in specific sectors, developing a roadmap for capacity building in quantum computing, and conducting studies to assess market needs and future trends.

Wissam Shmait, general manager of IBM Qatar, gave an overview of IBM's long-standing global leadership in information technology and its operations within Qatar. He discussed the company's strategy to play a central role in supporting the country's digital transformation, particularly in fields such as artificial intelligence, hybrid cloud solutions, and advanced computing technologies.

Petra Florizoone of IBM explained that quantum computing is not a replacement for classical computers, but rather a means to accelerate performance and enhance processing capabilities, noting that it represents the second revolution in the world of computing. She added that significant global investments are being directed toward the development of this promising technology, pointing out that its applications span various sectors, including healthcare, electric vehicles, and logistics, among others.

Adam Hammond of IBM reviewed the most prominent applications of quantum computing in the energy, healthcare, transport, shipping, banking, industrial, and petrochemical sectors.

German 10-year yield dips as risk aversion rises

Reuters
London

Germany's 10-year government bond was in demand yesterday as soft US economic data dented global risk appetite, while Federal Reserve policymakers put forward competing views of the state of the economy, further muddying the rate outlook.

European equities opened weaker following a slump in Asia, while US equity futures were pulling back after recent strong gains as major banks warned of a correction.

The broad risk-averse tone echoing through global markets boosted the appeal of safe-haven German government bonds, particularly against other eurozone debt.

"When you have risk-off, with selling in equity markets, Bunds (German government bonds) are the euro-denominated safe-haven to go to," said Rene Albrecht, rates analyst at DZ Bank. Germany's 10-year bond yield, the benchmark for the eurozone, was down 1.5 basis points at 2.651%, having touched its highest since October 10, the day before. Bond yields move inversely with prices.

France's 10-year bond yield was down one bp at 3.43%, with the yield gap between French and German 10-year bonds at 79 bps.

The European Central Bank had a largely uneventful policy meeting last week, keeping rates unchanged, with President Christine Lagarde reiterating that policy was in a "good place".

Market pricing for another rate cut by the third quarter of next year stands at about 50%, little changed from before that meeting.

"If there is another window for another cut from the ECB, it might be in the first half of 2026, probably the second quarter, in the case where growth does not pick up," DZ Bank's Albrecht said.

Germany's two-year yield, which is more sensitive to changes in ECB policy expectations, dipped one bp to 1.99%.

Importance of developing effective insolvency and restructuring systems highlighted at Doha event

The two-day event was organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with the World Bank Group and INSOL International.

The Middle East and North Africa (Mena) Forum on Insolvency and Restructuring Reform opened in Doha under the theme "Preserving value through efficient restructuring and exit."

The two-day event was organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with the World Bank Group and INSOL International.

The opening session was attended by representatives of government and private sector entities in Qatar, along with senior officials, experts, and specialists from across the region and beyond.

In their remarks, representatives of the organising bodies underlined the importance of developing effective insolvency and restructuring systems, strengthening regional co-operation, and adopting international best practices in this field.

The first day featured panel discussions and workshops highlighting international expertise in developing insolvency legislation and implementation mechanisms.

Participants examined key challenges facing the region and discussed recent innovations aimed at streamlining insolvency proceedings, including electronic case management systems that accelerate processes and enhance transparency.

Sessions also explored ways to advance restructuring practices in the Mena region, encouraging business leaders and stakeholders to make greater use of restructuring options available under insolvency laws.

Discussions addressed overcoming the stigma associated with insolvency, promoting a culture of corporate restructuring, and ensuring business continuity and sustainability.

Over two days, the forum features specialised sessions on building the capacity of insolvency practitioners through effective regulatory frameworks, licensing, and supervision.

It also highlights the role of technology and artificial intelligence in improving legal and regulatory efficiency, and examines the relationship between laws and insolvency legislation.

A workshop on preventive insolvency tools discusses advanced global restructuring strategies, including early-warning mechanisms and pre-insolvency frameworks.

The forum concluded with an open discussion session for sharing insights and practical recommendations to strengthen insolvency systems across the region.

The event sought to foster high-level dialogue among the private sector, policymakers, academics, and judges on insolvency law, creditor rights, and restructuring.

It served as a platform for knowledge exchange among international institutions, governments, and professionals, supporting regional reform efforts and promoting ongoing collaboration and learning.

Since its launch in 2023 by the World Bank Group and INSOL International, the Mena Forum has become a leading regional platform for advancing knowledge and best practices in insolvency and restructuring.

Private sector drives Qatar's next phase of growth: Sheikh Faisal

Qatar's private sector is playing a central role in shaping the country's next phase of growth, according to HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani, Chairman of Al Faisal Holding.

In an interview featured in The Report: Qatar 2025 by Oxford Business Group (OBG) Sheikh Faisal highlighted the private sector's growing contribution to the healthcare system through the establishment of specialised medical facilities and advanced support services.

"The private sector plays a vital role in strengthening Qatar's healthcare system, and we are seeing a clear and growing contribution in this area," he said.

"There has been significant investment in hospitals, specialised medical centres and support services, all of which are helping to build more resilient, responsive and future-ready healthcare infrastructure."

He noted digital transformation and the planned national health insurance scheme are opening up new opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

"We are also seeing great momentum in digital health," he said. "Qatar's focus on digital transformation is opening up exciting investment opportunities, especially in artificial intelligence-driven diagnostics, telemedicine and smart treatment solutions."

On sustainability, Sheikh Faisal emphasised the industrial sector's role in advancing Qatar's environmental goals.

"The industrial sector is pivotal in advancing sustainability goals, particularly through adopting cleaner production technologies and efforts to minimise waste," he said.

"Investing in solar energy to power factories and industrial facilities is now more feasible than ever, both economically and technologically."

He also underlined the private sector's contribution to circular economy practices and local value chain development. "Practices like reusing materials and recycling industrial waste are gaining momentum, turning what was once considered waste into valuable resources," he explained.

HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani, Chairman of Al Faisal Holding.

"Strengthening local supply chains reduces reliance on imports and significantly lowers the carbon footprint, while contributing to national self-sufficiency, one of Qatar's key strategic goals."

In tourism, Sheikh Faisal pointed to Qatar's record 5.1mn international visitors in 2024 as evidence of the country's growing appeal as a global destination.

"This surge in visitor numbers speaks volumes about the country's growing appeal," he said. "Such momentum offers a real opportunity for private hospitality investors to go beyond event-related demand and help shape a more varied and resilient tourism landscape."

He said the sector's potential lies in diversifying offerings to match global travel trends. "There is great potential in areas such as cultural tourism, wellness and eco-friendly retreats, and desert-inspired luxury stays, all of which offer something unique and authentic," he added.

Commenting on the interview, Fernanda Braz, OBG's Country Director for Qatar, said that the discussion with Sheikh Faisal offered valuable insights into the evolving role of private sector leadership in Qatar's economic transformation.

"Sheikh Faisal's perspective underscores how established family businesses continue to play a pivotal role in advancing the diversification agenda and supporting the country's long-term growth objectives," she said.

GCC insurance sector outlook stable on 'good' economic growth: Moody's

By Pratap John
Business Editor

Solid economic growth linked to government investment in non-oil-related sectors will over the next 12 to 18 months support the profitability of GCC insurers, according to Moody's Ratings.

The industry will also benefit from the spread of compulsory insurance and rising demand for health and life cover, Moody's said in a report yesterday.

Larger insurers will continue to outperform smaller ones, which will struggle to remain profitable because of intense price competition, rising claims, and high technology and regulatory costs. Some of the smaller insurers will see their solvency come under pressure as a result, leading to continued consolidation.

Some GCC insurers' significant reliance on relatively high risk investment assets also makes them vulnerable to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

"Our analysis focuses primarily on the GCC non-life sector, which accounts for over 80% of region's premium revenues, and on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which generate a combined 80% of the region's insurance premiums," Moody's noted.

Meanwhile, Moody's expects GCC countries to achieve good real GDP growth of around 4% in 2026, led by the region's dominant economies United Arab Emirates (UAE, Aa2 stable) and Saudi Arabia (Aa3 stable).

In both of these countries as well as in Kuwait (A1 stable), Oman (Baa3 stable) and Qatar (Aa2 stable), investment linked to large government-backed diversification projects will boost growth in non-oil sectors such as construction, tourism and manufacturing.

The expansion of these sectors will drive demand for a broader range of insurance, including property, liability, health and specialty cover. This will increase the GCC region's relatively low insurance penetration rate (premiums as a percentage of GDP) and help correct local insurers' bias toward medical and motor policies.

A gradual phase out of subsidies for utilities and education encourages consumers to actively manage their finances and to avail insurance as a wealth management tool, thereby supporting demand for savings and protection insurance. So whilst overall life insurance accounts for less than 20% of total premiums, demand for the life segment is also picking up.

GCC non-life insurance prices have improved in 2025, helped in the UAE by insurers raising prices in response to outsized storm damage claims last year.

The spread of compulsory insurance in several GCC countries, which along with increasing consumer awareness of insurance products, should result in positive underwriting profit for the sector as a whole for remainder of 2025 and into 2026 as well as in the longer term, Moody's noted.

According to the report, large GCC insurers benefiting from economies of scale will account for the lion's share of profitability improvements next year. Their smaller peers, in contrast, will struggle to make an underwriting profit amid intense competitive pressure, exacerbated by rising claims costs, increased regulatory expenses and higher reinsurance prices.

Furthermore, the extent of investment in technology required to remain competitive continues to rise, squeezing profits for subscale insurers.

Competitive pressures in the GCC market are amplified by the central role in the distribution chain of personal insurance brokers and aggregator platforms, which channel business toward the lowest cost operators, Moody's noted.

CLARRIO receiving award at the 2nd Qatar Investment and Innovation conference.

CLARRIO emerges winner of AI for good innovation challenge at Qatar Investment and Innovation conference

CLARRIO was chosen among the 10 pre-qualified startups that delivered live pitches to a panel of judges at the 2nd Qatar Investment and Innovation conference, organised by The Business Year, in partnership with Msheireb Properties, with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) as strategic partner.

A highlight of this year's conference was the AI (artificial intelligence) for Good Innovation Challenge, hosted in collaboration with the AI for Good initiative YAILs and its Doha chapter.

Ten pre-qualified startups, each with solutions aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, delivered live pitches to a panel of judges.

The winner, CLARRIO, received the opportunity to attend the AI for Good Global Summit 2025 in Geneva, alongside fast-track access to select international and local accelerator programmes. The award was presented by Faisal al-Malki, chief operating officer of Msheireb Properties.

The challenge reinforced Qatar's commitment to positioning itself as a regional leader in responsible artificial intelligence while showcasing how emerging technologies can address real-world challenges in sustainability, digital transformation, and social impact.