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Startup Grind awards support entrepreneurs and promote sustainable innovation

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Gulf countries go on borrowing spree in January with Asia help


From left: Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Thani bin Abdullah al-Thani, QIIB chairman, and Dr Abdulbasit Ahmed al-Shaibei, chief executive officer.

QIIB net profit surges 7.2% to QR1.35bn in 2025; recommends 53% cash dividend

QIIB has reported a 7.2% year-on-year increase in net profit to QR1.35bn in 2025 and recommended a total 53% dividend.

Earnings-per-share (EPS) increased to QR0.82 in 2025, reflecting the lender's ability to deliver sustainable value to its shareholders. The results demonstrate QIIB's continued strong performance and balanced growth across all financial indicators, underpinned by the strength of the Qatari economy, efficient operational and credit policies, and commitment to global best practices in governance and risk management.

Total assets amounted to QR62.6bn, representing a 4.4% yearly growth; while financing assets rose by 6.7% to QR41bn.

"The 2025 results underscore QIIB's robust financial position and the success of our strategy in achieving balanced, sustainable growth," said Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Thani bin Abdullah al-Thani, its chairman.

The board has recommended an additional 29% (QR0.29 a share) cash dividend, bringing the total dividends for the year to 53%. This recommendation remains subject to approval by the Qatar Central Bank and the general assembly of shareholders. Total deposits rose 4.6% year-on-year to QR43.3bn in 2025, reflecting customers' growing trust in QIIB's comprehensive Shariah-compliant banking solutions across both the retail and corporate segments.

"2025 was a year of qualitative achievements; we accelerated digital transformation, expanded our product suite, and solidified our presence in local capital markets," said Dr Abdulbasit Ahmed al-Shaibei, QIIB chief executive officer.

Sheikh Khalid said the bank has consistently strengthened its financial and operational indicators while maintaining high levels of efficiency and asset quality; "reinforcing the confidence of our shareholders and customers alike".

"In 2025, the bank further optimised operational efficiency, achieving a cost-to-income ratio of 18.6%, among the best in the local banking sector. We also maintained high asset quality, with the non-performing financing ratio at 2.9% and a coverage ratio of 100%, validating the effectiveness of our risk management framework," Dr al-Shaibei said.

Total equity reached QR10.1bn, while the capital adequacy ratio (Basel III) stood at 20.1%, well above the regulatory requirement, according to him. On digital innovation and strategic partnerships, he said the year 2025 marked significant milestones in QIIB's digital journey. The bank invested heavily in technological infrastructure and expanded its mobile and internet banking services.

In this regard, he highlighted that QIIB is the first bank in Qatar to launch the 'SWIFT GPI Tracker' on its mobile app and introduced the innovative 'Click to Pay' feature in collaboration with Visa.

The bank also forged high-impact partnerships, including a strategic alliance with national carrier Qatar Airways to launch a first-of-its-kind co-branded product, allowing customers to earn 'Avios'. Furthermore, QIIB signed a memorandum of understanding with United Development Company (UDC) to facilitate real estate financing in the 'Hazoom Lusail' project.

QatarEnergy signs long-term helium sales, purchase deal with Air Liquide

QatarEnergy and Air Liquide have signed a long-term sales and purchase agreement (SPA) for the supply of 300mn cubic feet per annum of helium from Qatar.

The agreement marks a new milestone in the long-standing relationship between the two global energy and industrial gas leaders, with Air Liquide being a foundation customer, an important helium off-taker, and a key technology provider for a number of Qatar's Helium production facilities.

"Air Liquide has been a strategic partner in the helium business since the startup of our first helium plant in 2005. It has been an integral player in providing a reliable supply of high-quality Qatari helium to a number of critical industries around the world," said HE Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, Minister of State for Energy Affairs, and the President and CEO of QatarEnergy.

Highlighting QatarEnergy's pleasure to continue its long-term partnership with Air Liquide as it helps meet the growing demand for helium; he said Qatar is one of the world's largest helium exporters.

"Our helium capacity is set to more than double with our North Field LNG (liquefied natural gas) expansion projects. This will further support a wide range of sectors and industries that depend on helium to drive human development," according to him.

Helium plays a pivotal role in a wide range of advanced technologies and essential industrial applications, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners, semiconductors, fibre optics, space exploration, deep sea diving, specialised welding, and other specialised applications.

QNB helping shape Qatar into region's premier fintech hub, says executive

QNB Group, the Lead Sponsor and strategic partner of Web Summit Qatar 2026, is reaffirming its position as a driving force behind the country's digital transformation journey.

By uniting decades of financial expertise with cutting-edge innovation, QNB is helping shape Qatar into the region's premier fintech hub, fully aligned with the ambitions of Qatar National Vision 2030.

"Digital transformation is not just about adopting technology but about reimagining banking as a catalyst for growth and resilience," said Fatma al-Baker, executive vice-president, Infrastructure Services, QNB Group, in light of Qatar's preparations to host the highly anticipated summit.

She said: "At QNB, we are focused on ensuring our systems can adapt, scale, and innovate in ways that empower individuals, businesses, and the wider financial ecosystem, driving both economic progress and national objectives."

As the financial backbone of Qatar's economy, QNB is leading the transformation of traditional banking practices through investments in agile and resilient infrastructure. This includes modernising customer journeys, embracing cloud technology, optimising operations, and prioritising advanced digital platforms to deliver seamless, secure, and scalable services.

"The future of banking in Qatar depends on institutions that can balance stability with agility. Through our Transformation Office and strategic partnerships, we are building a strong, human-centric digital future that supports the Qatar National Vision 2030 and a knowledge-based economy," added al-Baker.

Through its multi-year role as Diamond Sponsor and strategic partner of Web Summit Qatar, QNB provides a platform for collaboration with global innovators, fintech players, and startups, building a dynamic financial ecosystem that accelerates innovation, fosters partnerships, and strengthens the wider economy.

QNB will host a dedicated exhibition and thought leadership sessions at Web Summit Qatar 2026, featuring insights from its innovation and infrastructure teams. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how QNB is leveraging technologies, such as cloud platforms and AI, to deliver transformative, human-centred banking experiences that drive long-term economic growth.

Fatma al-Baker, executive vice-president, Infrastructure Services, QNB Group.

QDB launches 'Reyada Portal' to empower private sector

Qatar Development Bank (QDB) launched yesterday 'Reyada', a unified digital portal designed to empower Qatar-based companies by providing integrated enterprise development and specialised training services.

The launch, held at Scale7 Studio in Msheireb Downtown Doha, represents a strategic milestone in QDB's efforts to accelerate digital transformation, strengthen Qatar's entrepreneurship ecosystem and empower business owners.

The Reyada Portal serves as a primary and comprehensive hub for enterprise development and specialised training services. It also features a dedicated platform enabling business owners to directly connect with service providers and access competitive offers.

Designed with a user-friendly interface for both entrepreneurs and service providers, the portal facilitates efficient access to advisory services and business development tools aligned with each company's stage of growth. The portal supports operational efficiency and sustainable business growth in line with the objectives of the Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030.

QDB CEO Abdulrahman bin Hesham al-Sowaidi said: "Today, we are elevating our enterprise development services and support for the national entrepreneurship ecosystem to a new level of efficiency, reliability, and digital transformation through the launch of Reyada Portal.

"The portal offers a comprehensive range of services, programmes, and intelligent tools that address all the needs of entrepreneurs aspiring to establish new projects or expand their businesses, across development, training, and capacity-building services."

He added: "Through the portal's role as a link between business owners and listed service providers, we are confident it will be a catalyst that enhances the resilience and vitality of the private sector and its ability to evolve and integrate roles, thereby stimulating economic diversification efforts in Qatar."

The Reyada Portal provides entrepreneurs and Qatar-based companies with centralised access to development and training services through two main tracks.

The first is the Reyada Advisory Platform, which provides a variety of tools and products for enterprise development. It includes a support framework offered through financial grants to help SMEs cover part of their costs, subject to terms and conditions. This includes services related to operational capability-building, localisation, participation in exhibitions to explore new pathways for growth and expansion, and many more services.

The platform also connects companies with experts and service providers registered on the portal, who submit their offers based on each company's needs across a range of specialisations, enabling seamless and reliable access to the required services.

The second track, represented by the Reyada Academy, delivers comprehensive specialised training programmes that combine theoretical knowledge with practical application. It focuses on building capabilities and equipping entrepreneurs with the skills required for business success and enhanced competitiveness.

The academy will cover key business development areas, supporting entrepreneurs in refining business models, improving operational excellence, strengthening management efficiency, enhancing marketing and sales capabilities, and establishing sound governance and financial planning practices.

These efforts contribute to better decision-making and improved project readiness for sustainable growth.

The recently launched Financial Literacy Programme, now integrated into the Reyada Academy, exemplifies this commitment to developing entrepreneurial capabilities, and QDB will continue to introduce additional specialised training programs on a gradual basis.

The launch of Reyada Portal marks a new milestone in QDB's ongoing efforts to advance the national entrepreneurship ecosystem and demonstrates its strong commitment to empowering the private sector and increasing its contribution to the national economy.

By integrating business development and training services into a unified digital platform, QDB is facilitating greater access to knowledge, expertise, financing, and advisory services. This approach enhances companies' readiness, operational efficiency, and scalability, supporting national efforts to build an advanced model of sustainable growth and transformation towards a competitive, diversified, knowledge-based, and innovation-driven economy.

From left: Dr Hamad Salem Mejegheer, executive director of SME Development at QDB, and Ahmed Hassan al-Mahasna, senior manager of Marketing and Communication at QDB.

BUSINESS

Gold hits records as US policy rattles investors


People look at gold jewellery as they stand outside a shop at the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul yesterday. Gold climbed above $5,100 an ounce, having cracked $5,000 on Sunday, amid rising global uncertainty and turmoil set off by US President Donald Trump's policies.

AFP
London

Investors nervous about geopolitics, tariff threats and US budgetary issues flocked to buy gold Monday, pushing the safe-haven precious metal well into record territory.
The dollar sank, meanwhile, amid speculation of US-Japanese central bank co-ordination to support the yen.
Gold climbed above $5,100 an ounce, having cracked $5,000 on Sunday, amid rising global uncertainty and turmoil set off by US President Donald Trump's policies.
"It vaulted over the psychologically important 5,000 mark on a glittering streak, heading sharply higher as trade tensions emanating from the US unnerved investors," said Susannah Streeter, chief investment strategist at Wealth Club.
By comparison, gold could be had for just over $2,000 an ounce only two years ago.
Silver prices have also spiked to record territory.
"The relentless quest for hard assets continued amid yet more talk of tariffs and US government shutdowns," said Neil Wilson, a strategist at Saxo UK.
Several US senators have said they would vote against coming government spending bills after federal agents killed a second American citizen in Minneapolis, significantly increasing the chances of a government shutdown next week.
The dollar was weighed down by a surge in the yen on speculation that authorities may intervene to prop up the Japanese currency, but also by limited visibility on the US economy and inflation fears.
"The FX (foreign exchange) market is front and centre at the start of this week and the focus is on the huge move higher in the yen," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB trading group.
"Reports suggest that Japanese officials were joined by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York who bought yen to support the beleaguered currency," she added.
The yen had slid amid worries about Japan's fiscal position, the central bank's decision to hold off on interest rate hikes, and expectations that the US Federal Reserve will stay put on the rates front this week.
The stronger yen weighed on Tokyo's stock market because of its negative impact on exporters.

Gulf countries go on borrowing spree in January with Asia help

Bloomberg
Dubai

Gulf countries accelerated bond issuance in January as investors shifted toward emerging markets. The increase was partly driven by Asian demand, with Chinese banks making it to the roster of deal managers amid waning influence from US lenders.
Countries in the Gulf Co-operation Council issued $32.3bn of international bonds since the start of the year, about 25% more than in January 2025, according to Bloomberg calculations.
This is happening due to diversification goals and yield hunting, according to fixed-income strategist at Bloomberg Intelligence Basel al-Waqayan. "Preferences shifted away from developed market debt and into higher growth EM markets, particularly GCC," he said.
As Gulf countries strengthen ties with China, competition with the US in the region's bond markets is intensifying. Chinese banks are expanding their presence, gaining positions as placement managers, alongside UAE banks.
Bank of China and Industrial & Commercial Bank of China were substantially more active in Gulf eurobond issuance, while major US banks lost ground compared with a year earlier.
Saudi Arabia sold more than $20bn of international bonds since the start of the year, a record for a January as companies and banks join government fund raising.
Banks are increasingly turning to debt markets in response to tightening liquidity conditions, as slowing deposit growth and tougher capital rules make it harder to meet strong credit demand driven by the kingdom's Vision 2030 agenda. Higher capital requirements due to come into effect this year will force banks to keep more funds on their balance sheets.
Companies are also taking advantage of attractive pricing and rising demand from Asian investors to reinforce their finances.
"Favourable market conditions in terms on rates and spreads, still strong demand and rising Asian investor interest" are among reasons for rising Saudi borrowings, al-Waqayan said.
The Saudi government raised $11.5bn in early January through a dollar bond sale that attracted demand of $28bn. Saudi Electricity and Saudi Telecom followed with $2.4bn and $2bn Sukuk bonds. Saudi National Bank, Riyad Bank and Al Rajhi Bank raised at least $1bn each.

A Saudi man walks past the logo of Vision 2030 in Jeddah (file). The Saudi government raised $11.5bn in early January through a dollar bond sale that attracted demand of $28bn.

Emirates NBD posts net profit rise in 2025 driven by record lending growth

Reuters
Dubai

Emirates NBD, Dubai's largest bank by assets, yesterday reported a 4% rise in full-year net profit, citing record lending growth driven by "accelerating domestic and international demand."
Emirates NBD said in a statement that its net profit came in at 24bn dirhams ($6.53bn) last year, beating analysts' expectations of 22.8bn dirhams, according to mean estimates compiled by LSEG. The bank, majority-owned by Dubai's government, proposed an ordinary dividend of 100 fils per share.
UAE banks have benefited recently from rising credit demand as regional governments invest in sectors such as tourism and infrastructure to diversify their economies beyond oil revenues.
"Strong credit growth, lower provisioning requirements, and high interest margins supported banks' strong profitability in 2025, while liquidity improved as a result of deposit growth outpacing new lending," S&P Global Ratings said in a note on Emirati banks on Monday.
Emirates NBD said total gross loans climbed 24% to 658bn dirhams as of the end of December, driven by markets including Saudi Arabia, where the bank plans to further expand its network, which is expected to reach 24 branches by the first quarter of 2026.
"We will accelerate development across our international network, with an emphasis on advancing our strategic investment in India and deepening our presence in high-potential regional markets," Emirates NBD Chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al-Maktoum said in the statement.
The Dubai lender last year announced plans to invest $3bn to acquire a 60% stake in India's RBL Bank, the largest cross-border acquisition in India's financial sector.
Emirates NBD's deposits rose 18% to an overall 786bn dirhams last year, contributing to bringing total assets to 1.16tn dirhams.

Saudi Aramco gives initial price guidance on four-tranche bonds

Saudi Aramco has offered indicative pricing for four-tranche dollar-denominated bonds, a term sheet seen by Reuters showed on Monday, a deal likely to raise billions of dollars for the world's top oil exporter.
The indicative price for the three-year debt sale has been set at around 100 basis points over US Treasuries, the five-year comes with an initial price of around 115 bps over the same benchmark, while 10-year and 30-year bonds were initially priced at around 125 bps and 165 bps over Treasuries, respectively, the document showed.
Aramco last tapped the debt markets in September, raising $3bn with a sale of sukuk, or Islamic bonds, which followed a bond sale in May for $5bn. It had stayed away from the debt markets for three years until it returned to raise $6bn in July 2024.
Aramco, which has long been a cash cow for the Saudi government, said last August that it was cutting costs across the company and looking to divest assets as crude prices fell and its debt rose.
Aramco's total dividends for 2025 are expected around $85.4bn, a roughly 30% drop from 2024 as payouts linked to free cash flow dwindled. The government owns nearly 81.5% of Aramco directly, while the sovereign wealth fund PIF controls another 16%.
Reuters had reported on Aramco's cost-cutting and divestment measures ahead of its chief financial officer's confirmation on an earnings call, including a planned sale of gas plants.

Bloomberg QuickTake Q&A

What China's falling population means for its future

By James Mayger and Jing Li

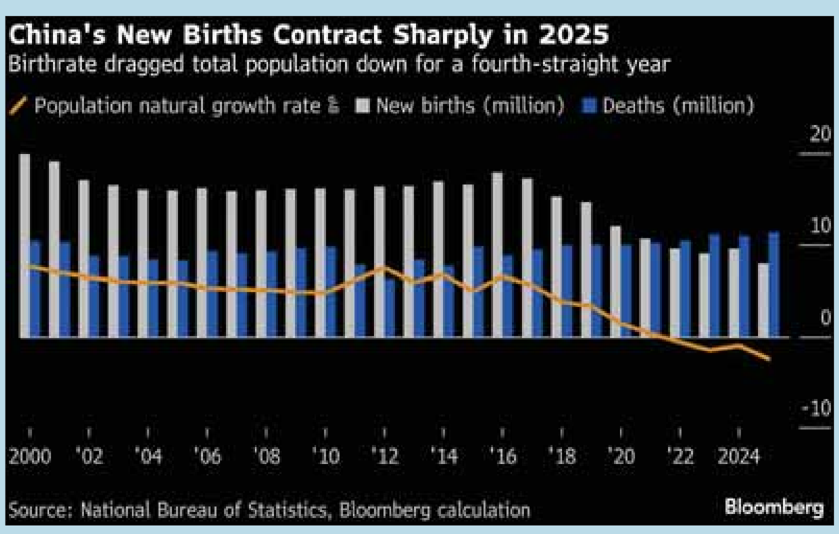
China's population is shrinking at a pace not seen in decades — a stark reversal for a country long defined by its sheer demographic scale.
After losing its crown as the world's most populous nation to India in 2023, official figures show that in 2025 China recorded its steepest annual drop in population since the Great Famine of 1960 under Mao Zedong, as falling birthrates and an ageing society converge — despite the end of its one-child policy.
The shift raises pressing questions about how much scope Beijing has to alter the trajectory that has far-reaching economic consequences.

What's happening to China's population?

A drop in the number of births and an increase in deaths left mainland China with 3.39mn fewer people in 2025 than a year earlier, according to data from the National Statistics Bureau.
China recorded 7.93mn births in 2025, the lowest level since at least the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Births have fallen every year since 2016, aside from a brief uptick in 2024.
Despite the end to China's one-child policy a decade ago, a longstanding preference for sons led some Chinese families to abort female fetuses, skewing the sex ratio at birth in earlier decades. Although that ratio has stabilised at around 104 boys per 100 girls in recent years, there is still a shortage of women of child-bearing age today.
China's fertility rate, or the average number of lifetime births per woman, fell to 1.3 in 2020, far below the 2.1 needed to keep the population stable, excluding migration. Outward migration by Chinese citizens appears to have increased in recent years, further weighing on population growth.
The country's demographic problem is also visible in the workforce. The working-age population — those aged between 16 to 59 — has been contracting for years and in 2025 fell to about 60.6% of the total population, down from more than 70% a decade earlier. Projections suggest that 30% of the population will be 60 or older by 2034.

What's the impact?

A shrinking population could erode China's long-term growth potential and diminish the likelihood that its economy will overtake the US in size — especially as the US population is expected to continue growing.
If China's overall population — and working-age cohort — keeps declining, fewer people are likely to be employed, which could push up labour costs and raise the price of manufactured goods.
Raising the retirement age could ease some of that pressure. For more than four decades, China kept the retirement age at 60 for men and 55 for female white-collar workers, even as life-expectancy rose. In 2024, Beijing adopted a plan to gradually delay retirement by as much as five years over a 15-year period — a move that promptly triggered public discontent.
Fewer people starting families would also weigh on long-term housing demand, with potential knock-on effects for construction activity and China's iron ore industry. At the same time, a shrinking workforce would make it harder for the government to finance its underfunded national pension system, as fewer workers pay into the system while the number of retirees continues to rise.
There could also be ripple effects beyond China. A smaller cohort of young people would likely reduce the number of Chinese students studying in the US, Australia and other countries, with implications for universities and local economies that depend on them.



What's being done about the birthrate?

In 2016, China's top decision-making body, the Communist Party's Politburo, ended the one-child policy to allow couples to have two children. In 2021, the rules were revised again to permit up to three children.
The 2016 rule that allowed couples to have two kids worked at first: The number of newborns that year rose to 17.9mn, more than 1mn higher than in 2015. But births have fallen each year after that, except for in 2024.
China began rolling out childcare subsidies last year. Couples are offered about $500 a year for each child born on or after January 1, 2025, until they reach the age of three. Some regions have also extended parental leave and offered tax rebates for parents, though such incentives are widely seen as too modest to meaningfully boost birthrates.

Where did the one-child policy come from?

After the creation of the People's Republic and the end of the civil war, the government trained tens of thousands of "barefoot doctors" to bring healthcare to poor and rural areas. The mortality rate plummeted and the population growth rate rose from 16 per thousand in 1949 to 25 per thousand just five years later.
This prompted the first attempts to encourage family planning in 1953. Even so, China's population expanded to more than 800mn in the late 1960s. By the 1970s, China was grappling with food and housing shortages. In 1979, leader Deng Xiaoping decided to limit most couples to a single child, with exceptions for rural farmers, ethnic minorities and certain circumstances, such as when a first child was disabled.
Enforcement was often coercive. According to Human Rights Watch, women were forced to have abortions. Children born outside the state plan were denied a hukou — a government registration required to access public services and other benefits.

How else is China trying to fix the problem?

Beijing it trying to lower the financial and time costs of raising children, as many couples say they can only afford to have one child — if any. The government has taken steps to shut down the for-profit, after-school tutoring industry to rein in education costs and has issued guidelines aimed at reducing abortions while providing more support for women raising children.
Still, if the experience of developed nations such as Japan or South Korea is any guide, it's extremely difficult — if not impossible — to radically raise birthrates, even with subsidies, free childcare and generous parental leave.

GAC honours Qatar Chamber for its continuous co-operation

The General Authority of Customs (GAC) has honoured Qatar Chamber (QC) in recognition of its continuous support and co-operation, during a ceremony held as part of the authority's celebration of World Customs Day.

The certificate of honour was presented by HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari to Sheikha Tamader al-Thani, director of the International Relations and Chambers Affairs Department at Qatar Chamber, in the presence of Ahmed bin Abdullah al-Jamal, chairman of the General Authority of Customs.

Sheikha Tamader expressed her appreciation to the General Authority of Customs for the honour, noting that it reflects the longstanding partnership and co-operation between the two entities.

She affirmed their shared commitment to supporting trade flows and enhancing the business environment in Qatar.

She affirmed that the honour serves as an impetus to further develop collaboration mechanisms between both sides, thereby facilitating customs procedures, improving private-sector services, and enhancing national economic competitiveness. Sheikha Tamader also stressed that Qatar Chamber attaches great importance to strengthening co-operation with the authority, praising the authority's pivotal role in supporting foreign trade and protecting the national economy. She also expressed her hope to expand areas of co-operation in the future in a manner that serves the interests of the business community and supports the sustainable economic development in Qatar.

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FDI inflows from UK to Qatar reach $7.7bn between 2017 and 2024

QNA
Doha

Inflows of the foreign direct investment (FDI) from Britian to Qatar reached $7.7bn between 2017 and 2024. This is a clear indication of the strength of bilateral investment relations and the growing role of cross-border investments in supporting economic growth in both countries.

A comprehensive joint report launched by Invest Qatar, the Investment Promotion Agency, in partnership with the British Chamber of Commerce Qatar (BCCQ), said that the inflows reflected the strong investor confidence in Qatar's business-friendly environment and the growing opportunities for long-term growth. The report chronicled the development of the Qatar-UK relationship, highlighting emerging trade, investment, and business opportunities, setting the stage for the next phase of co-operation between the two nations.

The report underscored the growing presence of British businesses in Qatar, with more than 600 companies now operating across key sectors. Qatar's strategic geographic location, coupled with a resilient and investor-friendly environment, continues to draw British companies keen to achieve sustainable growth and access wider regional markets.

According to the report, several emerging sectors have been identified as priorities for future British investment in Qatar. These include renewable energy, infrastructure, education, technology, financial services, and healthcare. Each of these sectors presents substantial opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and long-term expansion, aligning closely with Qatar's national development objectives and the evolving interests of British businesses.

Sheikh Ali Alwaleed al-Thani, CEO, Invest Qatar, said: "Qatar and the United Kingdom share a robust and future-oriented economic partnership grounded in aligned strategic priorities. This report underscores the strength of our bilateral ties, from the Qatar-UK Strategic Dialogue to the Future Framework, and outlines clear pathways to expand investment, innovation and sustainable growth across key sectors in both markets."

Emad Turkman MBE, Chairman of British Chamber of Commerce Qatar (BCCQ), said: "The British Chamber of Commerce Qatar is pleased to present this report, developed in close collaboration with Invest Qatar, which highlights the enduring partnership between the UK and Qatar. As Qatar continues to strengthen its position as a global investment hub, BCCQ remains committed to supporting British businesses and advancing a partnership that delivers long-term, shared prosperity."

In 2022, Qatar and the United Kingdom marked a significant milestone with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

This landmark occasion celebrated five decades of strong co-operation and enduring partnership, reflecting the depth of political, economic, and cultural ties that have continued to evolve and strengthen over time.

As both nations continue to deepen their partnership, the joint report serves as a strategic roadmap for future engagement. By enhancing co-operation across critical sectors and encouraging greater commercial interaction, Qatar and the United Kingdom are well positioned to achieve meaningful economic impact and shared success.

Foreign and Gulf funds lift QSE above 11,300 levels

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

Discounting the increasing geopolitical concerns and uncertainties around Washington's tariff policies, the Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) yesterday saw its key index surge more than 135 points and capitalisation add about QR7bn.

An across the board buying lifted the 20-stock Qatar Index 1.21% to 11,322.05 points, recovering from an intraday low of 11,203 points.

The telecom, banking and insurance counters witnessed higher than average demand in the main market, whose year-to-date gains improved to 5.2%.

As much as 63% of the traded constituents extended gains to investors in the main bourse, whose capitalisation added QR6.92bn or 1.03% to QR677.93bn mainly on mid and small cap segments.

The foreign institutions were net buyers in the main market, whose trade turnover and volumes were on the increase.

The Gulf funds were seen increasingly bullish in the main market, which saw as many as 103 exchange traded funds (sponsored by AlRayan Bank and Doha Bank) valued at QR767 trade across three deals.

The Arab individuals' weakened net selling had its influence on the main bourse, which saw no trading of sovereign bonds.

The foreign retail investors' lower net profit booking had its effect on the main market, which saw no trading of treasury bills.

The Total Return Index gained 1.21%, the All Share Index by 1.15% and the All Islamic Index by 1.21% in the main bourse.

The telecom sector index shot up 2.15%, banks and financial services (1.41%), insurance (1.3%), transport (0.84%), real estate (0.51%), consumer goods and services (0.43%) and industrials (0.41%).

As many as 34 gained, while 14 declined and six were unchanged.

Major movers in the main market include Gulf Warehousing, Mekdam Holding, Qamco, Qatar Islamic Bank, Qatar Insurance, QNB, Commercial Bank, QIIB, Dukhan Bank, Industries Qatar, Ooredoo, Vodafone Qatar and Nakilat. In the junior bourse, Techno Q saw its shares appreciate in value.

Nevertheless, Qatar General Insurance and Reinsurance, Doha Bank, Qatari Investors Group, Inma Holding and Qatar Electricity and Water were among the shakers in the main market.

The foreign institutions turned net buyers to the tune of QR90.63mn compared with net sellers of QR13.44mn the previous day. The Gulf institutions' net buying strengthened considerably to QR38.05mn against QR10.16mn on January 25.

The Arab retail investors' net selling decreased substantially to QR4.59mn compared to QR18.55mn on Sunday.

The foreign individual investors' net selling eased marginally to QR3.45mn against QR4.53mn the previous day.

However, the Qatari individuals were net sellers to the extent of QR66.25mn compared with net buyers of QR7.13mn on January 25.

The domestic funds turned net sellers to the tune of QR52.76mn against net buyers of QR19.24mn on Sunday.

The Gulf retail investors' net profit booking grew perceptibly to QR1.63mn compared to QR0.02mn the previous day.

The Arab funds had no major net exposure for the third straight session.

The main market saw 22% jump in trade volumes to 142.95mn shares, 72% in value to QR516.75mn and 63% in deals to 30,660.

In the venture market, a total of 0.04mn equities valued at QR0.07mn changed hands across 10 transactions.


An across the board buying lifted the 20-stock Qatar Index 1.21% to 11,322.05 points, recovering from an intraday low of 11,203 points

Startup Grind awards support entrepreneurs and promote sustainable innovation

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

Startup Grind Doha recently announced the winners of its 'Tech Startup Community Awards', which, according to a veteran Qatari businessman, supports entrepreneurship and fosters sustainable innovation.

The 'Tech Startup Community Awards' recognised outstanding founders, startups, mentors, investors, and ecosystem leaders who continue to shape and strengthen Qatar's entrepreneurial landscape, Startup Grind Doha announced in a statement.

The awards ceremony brought together founders, innovators, investors, and ecosystem partners to celebrate excellence, impact, and community spirit within Qatar's fast-growing startup ecosystem.

Now in its second edition, the awards remain "a community-led initiative created by the community, for the community." This year's winners represent a diverse range of sectors and contributions, reflecting the depth and maturity of innovation emerging from Qatar.

The winners of the 'Tech Startup Community Awards' for 2025 are Steve Mackie (Community Builder of the Year), Dr Hanan el-Basha (Mentor of the Year), Shipbee (Tech Disruptor Award), Empowrd (Idea Stage Startup of the Year), Emma Systems (Growth Stage Startup of the Year), PayLater (Breakthrough Startup of the Year), Golden Gate Ventures (Most Value Added Investor), Hissa al-Thani (Female Founder), Lillia (AI Startup of the Year), and Karty (FinTech Startup of the Year).

The chapter director of Startup Grind Doha stated, "These awards represent more than just recognition: They celebrate the people and startups who consistently give back, push boundaries, and help build a stronger, more connected startup ecosystem in Qatar. The winners truly represent the spirit of collaboration and innovation that defines our community."

As the Title Sponsor of the event, MBK Global reaffirmed its commitment to supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in Qatar.

Veteran entrepreneur Sheikh Mansoor bin Khalifa al-Thani, who is also chairman of MBK Global, said: "Supporting initiatives like the Startup Grind Tech Startup Community Awards aligns strongly with our belief in empowering entrepreneurs and building sustainable innovation ecosystems.

"These awards highlight the talent, ambition, and collaborative spirit driving Qatar's startup community forward, and we are proud to support a platform that recognises those creating real impact."

As an annual event, the Tech Startup Community Awards aim to spotlight role models, encourage collaboration, and inspire the next generation of founders by showcasing success stories across different stages of the startup journey, Startup Grind Doha added.


The winners of the 2025 edition of 'Startup Grind Doha Community Awards' with veteran entrepreneur Sheikh Mansoor bin Khalifa al-Thani, who is also chairman of MBK Global, and Dr Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, president of the Youth Entrepreneurial Club, as well as other investors, startup founders, and ecosystem enablers, during the awarding ceremony held recently.

Fed may hold rates steady; focus shifts to leadership changes

Reuters
Washington

The Federal Reserve is expected to hold interest rates steady this week at a meeting overshadowed by a Trump administration criminal investigation of US central bank chief Jerome Powell, an evolving effort to fire Fed Governor Lisa Cook, and the coming nomination of a successor to take over for Powell in May. Only three scheduled policy meetings remain in Powell's eight-year stint as the world's top central banker, but the typically smooth transition has become a potentially disruptive period.

Powell faces the controversial decision of whether to stay on as a Fed governor under his successor, the Supreme Court may rule whether Cook becomes the first Fed governor removed by a president, and President Donald Trump's nominee to lead the central bank must convince US senators he won't be captive to Trump's demands.

With so much in motion - and the Fed's independence at stake - the policy debate seems almost secondary, although analysts at this point largely expect the central bank's institutional guardrails to hold. Market-based inflation expectations and longer-term US bond yields have for now shown no widespread fear about the Fed's future. "It's not possible to view the actions of the next Fed chair as separate from the economic environment or their ability to influence other FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) participants," said Tim Duy, chief US economist with SGH Macro Advisors. Indeed, whoever succeeds Powell will still need to convince other US central bank governors and the five voting Fed regional bank presidents of the need for any rate cuts, regardless of Trump's wishes. "Trump will need greater turnover at the Fed to fully control the institution," Duy said.

That process will take a major step forward when Trump announces, perhaps this week, his nominee to succeed Powell. The finalists include Trump economic adviser Kevin Hassett, Fed Governor Christopher Waller, former Fed Governor Kevin Warsh and BlackRock's chief bond investment manager, Rick Rieder.

Trump has excoriated the Fed and Powell for failing to deliver the large rate cuts the president feels are necessary to boost the economy.

The Fed's two-day meeting will conclude on Wednesday with policymakers expected to leave the central bank's benchmark interest rate on hold in the current 3.50-3.75% range.

No new economic or policy projections are due, but investors at this point expect the Fed to pause further rate cuts until June, presumably under Powell's successor. Economic data since the last meeting in early December has shown little change in either labour market or inflation trends, offering scant impetus for guidance on when rates might fall again. Job growth has been weak, but the unemployment rate dipped in December to 4.4%, amid strong economic growth and consumer spending.

The Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index the Fed uses for its 2% inflation target was slightly higher than expected, at 2.8%, in November.

Powell is scheduled to hold his usual post-meeting press conference on Wednesday, but his remarks may be less about the policy debate than what happened between meetings - including the receipt of a US Department of Justice subpoena and threatened criminal probe of the Fed chief, and Powell's response in an extraordinary video statement calling it part of Trump's campaign to pressure him and the central bank for rate cuts.


The Federal Reserve building in Washington, DC. The Fed is expected to hold interest rates steady this week at a meeting overshadowed by a Trump administration criminal investigation of US central bank chief Jerome Powell, an evolving effort to fire Fed Governor Lisa Cook, and the coming nomination of a successor to take over for Powell in May.