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Cyclical factors underpin dollar resilience despite structural headwinds

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Commercial banks' assets rise 3.3% to QR2.2tn in June: QCB

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar's banking sector continued to demonstrate strong financial performance in June, supported by growth in assets, customer deposits, credit facilities and domestic liquidity, according to monthly data from the Qatar Central Bank (QCB).

Commercial bank assets reached QR2.2tn, up 3.3% year-on-year from QR2.13tn in June 2025 and 0.45% month-on-month from QR2.19tn in May. Foreign assets rose sharply by 26.5% annually to QR396.1bn, while domestic assets increased marginally to QR1.74tn.

Customer deposits climbed 5% year-on-year to QR1.11tn, compared with QR1.05tn a year earlier, and rose 0.19% monthly. Public-sector deposits increased 9.63% to QR402.22bn, while private-sector deposits grew 4.1% to QR503.4bn. Non-resident deposits, meanwhile, declined 1.26% annually and 2.72% monthly to QR199.46bn.

The total credit facilities of commercial banks reached QR1.47tn, marking a 5.9% annual growth, while remaining broadly stable month-on-month. Credit extended outside Qatar surged 120.6% to QR139.9bn, while domestic credit increased 0.4% to QR1.33tn.

The credit was distributed across several sectors, with services accounting for QR304.93bn, followed by the public sector at QR390.88bn, general trade at QR215.18bn, consumption at QR189.84bn, real estate at QR180.84bn, contractors at QR38.17bn, industry at QR11.94bn and other sectors at QR780.8mn.

Domestic liquidity, measured by M2, rose 9.9% year-on-year to QR813.33bn, compared with QR740.3bn in June 2025, and increased 1.56% from May. Issued currency stood at QR22.24bn, up 6.52% annually but down 6.27% month-on-month.

The data point to continued expansion of Qatar's banking balance sheets, strong depositor confidence and sustained lending activity. The sharp rise in foreign assets and overseas credit also highlights the growing international reach of Qatari banks and diversification of their income and credit portfolios.

In the meantime, simultaneous growth in assets, deposits, credit and liquidity indicates a solid banking environment capable of supporting major development projects and Qatar's Third National Development Strategy, particularly as new LNG production capacity is expected to stimulate further economic and investment activity.

Dukhan Bank wins 2 titles at *Euromoney* Islamic Finance Awards

Dukhan Bank has won two major accolades at the 2026 *Euromoney* Islamic Finance Awards, receiving the 'Qatar's Best Islamic Bank' and 'Qatar's Best Islamic Digital Bank' awards.

The awards reinforce Dukhan Bank's position as one of Qatar's leading Islamic financial institutions, recognising its continued progress in delivering innovative, Shariah-compliant financial solutions, advancing digital transformation, and maintaining a strong customer-centric approach.

The recognition comes amid a period of sustained strategic momentum for the bank, marked by continued growth across its retail, wholesale, private banking, and digital banking segments, alongside the introduction of several pioneering digital solutions and strategic partnerships.

These included the launch of Qatar's first QDI-integrated digital onboarding kiosk, the introduction of Visa Card-Linked Offers (CLO) across the CEMEA region, enabling customers to access personalised merchant offers directly through their eligible Visa cards, and the continued expansion of the Bank's broader digital banking ecosystem. The bank also enhanced its real-time payment capabilities through Fawran and further strengthened the customer experience with the introduction of Tahweel, its enhanced local transfer service.

The bank has also continued to enhance its customer proposition by combining personalised relationship management with advanced digital capabilities, delivering seamless and convenient banking experiences across its retail and private banking businesses.

The approach reflects Dukhan Bank's continued focus on enhancing accessibility, expanding its product offering, and delivering innovative Shariah-compliant solutions that combine convenience, service excellence, and long-term value.

Dukhan Bank acting Group CEO Ahmed I Hashem said, "These recognitions from *Euromoney* reflect Dukhan Bank's continued focus on innovation, customer experience, and delivering Shariah-compliant banking solutions that meet the evolving needs of our customers.

"Being named both Qatar's Best Islamic Bank and Qatar's Best Islamic Digital Bank reinforces the strong progress we continue to achieve across our strategic priorities, particularly in digital transformation and operational excellence. We remain committed to driving sustainable growth, strengthening our digital capabilities, and contributing to the continued development of Qatar's financial sector."

Dukhan Bank has continued to receive regional and international recognition for its innovation, financial performance, and customer experience leadership. Earlier this year, the bank was ranked among *Forbes Middle East's* Top 100 Listed Companies in the Middle East for 2026, reflecting its strong financial performance and sustained growth.

It was named the World's Best Islamic Private Bank by *Global Finance* for the third consecutive year. It also received the Best Business Card Offering in MENA 2026 award from *MEED*, recognising its continued focus on delivering innovative, customer-centric banking solutions.

The awards reinforce Dukhan Bank's position as one of Qatar's leading Islamic financial institutions, recognising its continued progress in delivering innovative, Shariah compliant financial solutions

Fawran transactions value jumps 145% to QR6.745bn in June: QCB

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

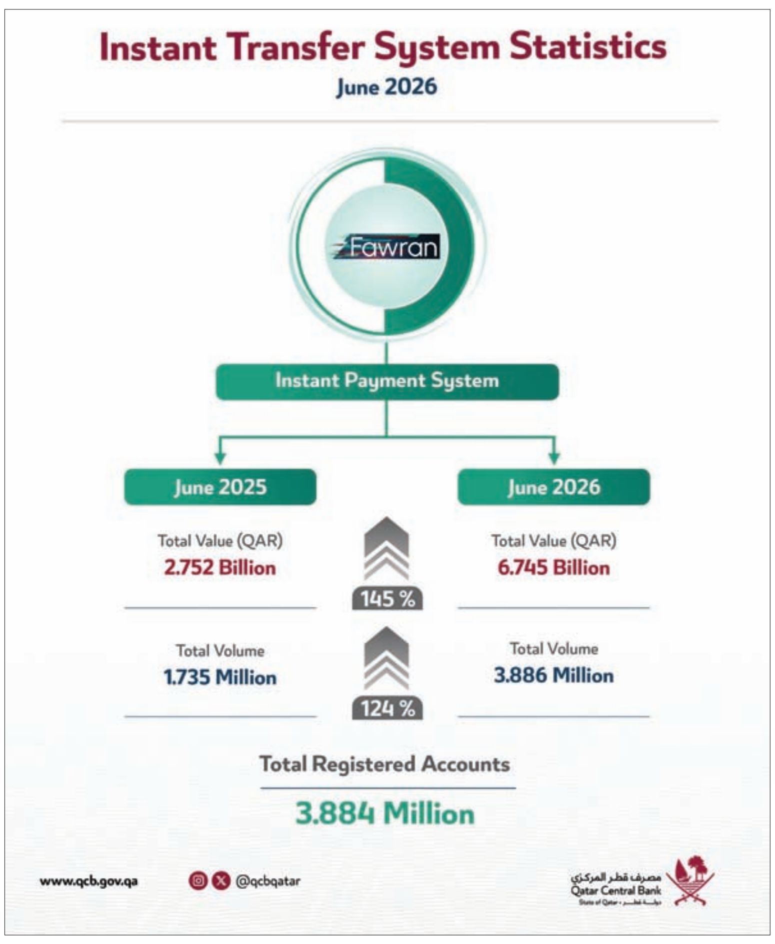
Qatar's instant payment infrastructure recorded a significant surge in activity during June, with the Fawran Instant Payment System posting substantial year-on-year growth in both transaction value and volume, according to the latest statistics released by the Qatar Central Bank (QCB).

The figures highlight the accelerating adoption of digital payments in Qatar and the growing role of instant transfers in the country's financial ecosystem. Accordingly, the total value of transactions processed through Fawran reached QR6.745bn in June 2026, compared with QR2.752bn in June 2025, an annual increase of 145%.

In absolute terms, transaction value rose by around QR3.993bn over the 12-month period, meaning the value processed through the system was about 2.45 times higher than the level recorded in June last year.

The transaction volumes also recorded strong growth, rising to 3.886mn in June this year, compared with 1.735mn in June 2025. This is an increase of 124%, or around 2.151mn additional transactions in just one year, which clearly indicates the rapidly expanding use of instant payments among individuals and businesses across the country.

The increase in transaction value was faster than the rise in transaction volume, indicating that users were making more payments through the system in addition to transferring larger amounts on average. Based on the reported figures, the average transaction value increased from around QR1,586 in June 2025 to QR1,736 in June 2026, an increase of around 9.5%.



The QCB's statistics indicate that the user base of system is expanding. The total number of registered accounts reached 3.884mn, underlining the broad adoption of instant payment services and the increasing integration of digital financial solutions into everyday transactions.

Fawran forms part of Qatar's broader digital payments infrastructure overseen by the QCB. The system enables customers to make instant transfers between participating bank accounts, supporting faster and more convenient movement of funds. Its availability around the clock and the use of different identifiers for beneficiaries are designed to make transfers more accessible while supporting efficient and secure digital transactions.

The system's rapid growth reflects a wider shift in consumer and business payment behaviour, as digital channels increasingly replace traditional methods of transferring money. The sharp increase in both transaction volume and value suggests that instant payments are becoming an increasingly important component of Qatar's financial infrastructure, supporting faster transactions and greater convenience for users.

The June 2026 figures also build on the growth recorded during the previous year. Fawran transaction value had already increased from QR2.752bn in June 2025 to QR5.092bn in December 2025, while the number of monthly transactions rose from 1.735mn to 3.187mn during the same period. The further increase to QR6.745bn and 3.886mn transactions in June 2026 indicates continued momentum in the adoption of instant payment services.

Alongside instant payment services, the country's payment ecosystem includes mobile payment solutions, electronic payment gateways, automated teller machine and point-of-sale networks, as well as systems supporting high-value interbank settlements.

The latest figures provide a clear indication of the pace at which digital payments are becoming embedded in Qatar's financial landscape. With QR6.745bn in transactions, 3.886mn transactions and 3.884mn registered accounts recorded in June 2026, Fawran is emerging as a major channel for fast digital money transfers.

Qatar Chamber signs MoU with Portuguese Industrial Association

Qatar Chamber has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Portuguese Industrial Association – Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AIP-CCI), aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two organisations.

The signing ceremony, virtually via video conference, was led by Qatar Chamber acting general manager Ali Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri and Portuguese Industrial Association director Filomena Pina Perez.

The MoU aims to promote business development, encourage investment in Qatar and Portugal, and support the establishment of company branches in both countries. It also seeks to foster joint efforts to capitalise on emerging international business opportunities in the current global economic environment.

It places particular emphasis on market research, consultancy services, knowledge and expertise exchange, the promotion of trade delegations, and enhanced cooperation between Qatari and Portuguese companies.

Al-Mansouri stated that the MoU represents an important step toward strengthening cooperation between the two organisations and further enhancing the economic and trade relations between Qatar and Portugal.

He highlighted the strong and longstanding ties between Qatar and Portugal, noting that there are promising opportunities to expand cooperation between the private sectors of both countries.

He noted that the agreement provides an effective framework for strengthening communication between Qatari and Portuguese businesses, facilitating the exchange of information, organising business meetings and trade missions, and exploring available investment opportunities. Al-Mansouri expressed his hope that this cooperation would contribute to increasing bilateral trade, encouraging mutual investments, and supporting the establishment of new joint ventures and partnerships in sectors of common interest.

Perez said the signing of the MoU would help strengthen cooperation between the business communities of both countries, encourage the exchange of trade delegations, and stimulate reciprocal investment.

She also expressed her hope that the coming period would witness visits by Qatari business delegations to Portugal to explore investment opportunities, particularly in the industrial sector, while noting the Portuguese side's strong interest in learning more about the investment opportunities available in Qatar.

Chamber acting general manager Ali Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri and Portuguese Industrial Association director Filomena Pina Perez during the virtual meeting.

LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

Companies' borrowing and floating charges

By Dr AbdelGadir Warsama Ghalib

The main purposes for establishing companies include, inter alia, undertaking trading activities, join forces with others in the same field and to perform business away from direct personal responsibility. Another important feature for corporate business is enabling proprietors to borrow under the name of the company. Being a legal person of juristic nature will enable companies to borrow and obtain loans for legitimate purposes.

At first, one would suppose that a sole trader being personally liable would find it easier than a company to raise money by borrowing. In practice, however, this is not so since a company is often able to grant a more effective charge to secure its indebtedness. This is due to the evolution of a highly beneficial type of security known as "floating charge". This means, a charge which floats like a cloud over the whole assets from time falling within a generic description, but without preventing the mortgagor from disposing of these assets in the usual course of business until something occurs to cause the charge to become fixed.

This charge is particularly suitable when a business has no fixed assets such as land, which can be included in a normal mortgage but carries a large and valuable stock in trade. Since this stock needs to be turned over in the course of business a fixed charge is impracticable because the consent of the mortgagee would be needed every time anything was sold and a new charge would have to be entered into whenever anything was bought. A floating charge obviates these difficulties, enabling the stock to be turned over but attaching to whatever it is converted into to whatever new stock is acquired.

The use of this beneficial type of security is in practice restricted to companies.

By virtue of it, the lender can obtain an effective security on all the undertakings and assets of the company both present and future, either alone or in conjunction with a fixed charge on its land.

If, in addition, the lender requires some personal security he can insist on some members (directors of the company) to join as personal guarantors. By this, he can place himself in a stronger position than if he merely had the personal security of individual traders.

It, therefore, happens not frequently, that a business is converted into a company solely in order to enable capital be raised by borrowing. Nowadays, corporate guarantees compared to personal guarantees, play a greater role in securing finance and cash flow for any business. The law, is not silent, as it allows companies to take loans and financial assistance, whenever and as required.

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Kuwait's KPC signs $16bn lease and leaseback deal for oil pipeline network

Reuters
Dubai

Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC) has signed a $16bn deal to lease and lease back its crude oil pipeline network with a consortium comprising global funds Blackstone, Brookfield and KKR, the state-owned Gulf firm said on Saturday.

It said it was the largest foreign direct investment in the country's history.

Under the investment called Project Peregrine, KPC's unit Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is establishing a joint venture with the three global investors in a lease and leaseback structure for a 20.5-year period that includes a volume-based tariff, KPC said in a statement.

"This transaction sends a powerful signal that Kuwait continues to rise as an attractive destination for global capital, even amid a challenging regional environment," KPC Deputy Chairman and CEO Shaikh Nawaf Saud al-Sabah said in the statement.

The process for the stake sale was launched just before joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28, Reuters previously reported citing sources.

Iran continues to attack infrastructure in Kuwait and elsewhere in the region after an interim truce between the US and Iran that was meant to end the Iran warcollapsed last month.

Iran said on Friday it had attacked US military equipment depots in northern Kuwait, and the positions of US troops at Camp Arifjan and at Camp Doha, near Kuwait City.

The KPC deal is part of a broader push by Gulf state oil companies and sovereign investors to raise funds from infrastructure assets and attract foreign capital, as they look to fund domestic investment plans. It follows pipeline fundraisings by Saudi Arabia's Aramco, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and Bahrain's Bapco Energies.

Blackstone, Brookfield and KKR will collectively hold a 49% stake in the joint venture, while KOC will retain a 51% stake as well as full ownership and operational control of the network, which comprises 13 pipelines spanning a total of around 320 kilometres (199 miles).

The transaction is expected to generate $7.85bn in upfront proceeds at closing, KPC said, adding it will support the oil company's capital expenditure plans.

KPC's pipeline network transports crude oil and refined products across Kuwait, linking the country's oilfields to export terminals on the Arabian Gulf.

Centerview Partners, HSBC and JP Morgan acted as financial advisors to KPC.

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Add a month at sea and $2.5mn: What it costs oil tankers to avoid Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb

Reuters
London

With two of its key oil export routes – the Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb straits – disrupted by Iran and Iran-allied Houthis , Saudi Arabia has to resort to exporting oil via Egypt's Suez Canal.

While the kingdom has previously used the Suez route to export some of its oil, it has not tested it as the main export outlet for decades.

Unlike in the 1970s and 1980s, when Saudi Arabia's top oil buyers sat in Europe and the US, the majority of its buyers today are in Asia.

To get to Asia, tankers with Saudi oil will have to circumnavigate the whole of Africa, adding around a month to their journey.

It takes only 19 days for a tanker to sail from Saudi Arabia's Red Sea port of Yanbu to Taiwan via Bab el-Mandeb.

A route via Suez, the Mediterranean and Gibraltar and then around the Cape of Good Hope takes 48 days, according to Kpler and LSEG shipping data.

The journey would double fuel costs alone to around $2.87mn from $1.26mn, according to Reuters calculations using LSEG data.

Crossing the Suez Canal adds $1mn in fees, according to LSEG.

Saudi Arabia re-routed most of its oil exports from the Gulf to the Red Sea when the US-Iran war disrupted shipments via Hormuz in February. The Houthis attacked ships in the Red Sea this week making the workaround unsafe and encouraging the kingdom to send oil via the Suez Canal.

Big tankers will need to sail via the Suez half empty due to restrictions and top up in the Mediterranean, according to Energy Aspects.

To achieve that, Saudi Arabia could partially unload tankers into the Sumed pipeline, a 320-km (200-mile) oil link bypassing the Suez and connecting Ain Sokhna oil terminal on the Red Sea to Sidi Kerir on the Mediterranean.

The pipeline can transport up to 2.5mn barrels per day out of the kingdom's total exports of 7mn bpd.

Ships move through the Suez Canal, in Ismalia, Egypt. With two of its key oil export routes – the Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb straits – disrupted by Iran and Iran-allied Houthis, Saudi Arabia has to resort to exporting oil via Egypt's Suez Canal.

Opec+ seen likely to again raise oil output targets from September

Reuters
Moscow/London

Opec+ oil-producing countries will likely agree a further hike in output targets from September when they meet on August 2, three sources have said, even though the Iran war is again hindering some of its members from pumping more.

The group has been raising targets in recent months, hoping to recapture market share when the war ends. But their plans have been repeatedly delayed by renewed fighting and disruptions to oil flows from the Gulf and in recent days from the Red Sea.

Seven core Opec+ members - Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Algeria, Kazakhstan and Oman - will likely increase their output target by about 188,000 barrels per day for September, the same as for June, July and August, the sources told Reuters.

Opec and Russian authorities did not immediately respond to a request for comment. All sources spoke on condition of anonymity and said no final decision had been made.

Opec+ output is currently far below the quotas as the Iran war disrupts exports from Gulf members. Opec+ in June pumped 36.28mn bpd, down from almost 43mn bpd in February before the war began, Opec figures show.

The August 2 meeting comes as oil prices have risen to $100 a barrel amid renewed concerns over Gulf exports after the collapse of a preliminary US-Iran peace agreement, which had allowed shipments to increase through the Strait of Hormuz.

The Houthis have also attacked Saudi Arabian oil tankers in recent days, disrupting the main Gulf bypass for Saudi exports.

The seven Opec+ producers are boosting output as part of the phased rollback of a 1.65mn bpd supply cut agreed in 2023, when the group still included the United Arab Emirates, which left Opec in May.

The seven have hiked their output quotas from April through August by 958,000 bpd. Another increase of roughly 188,000 bpd for September will fully unwind the 2023 cut taking into account the UAE exit, Reuters calculations show.

Opec+ includes 21 members including Iran, but in recent years only the seven countries, and the UAE until its departure, have been involved in monthly production management.

Samsung, SK Group seal $950bn deals as Korea hosts AI powers

Reuters
San Francisco/Seoul

Republic of Korea announced $950bn in new AI initiatives involving Samsung Electronics, SK Group and US tech firms as global AI leaders rush to fill a shortage of faster chips to power and develop more advanced systems.

SK Group has signed deals worth $750bn, including SK Hynix's partnership with Nvidia valued at more than $500bn, Korea's presidential Blue House said after an AI summit hosted by President Lee Jae Myung in San Francisco.

Samsung Electronics said it had signed a memorandum of understanding with Broadcom covering up to $200bn across memory chips, foundry services and advanced packaging.

The deals are the latest moves by US AI firms hoping to lock in supply as demand for chips and computing infrastructure outpaces supply, driving tech companies into closer partnerships with Korea's semiconductor and memory leaders.

Speaking at the summit, Lee said Korea would lead the way to a new era of AI in partnership with global technology companies, making available its "dynamic AI ecosystem" to expand the global market for industrial and personal AI use.

He unveiled a "San Francisco AI Declaration" that outlined Republic of Korea's AI ambitions for technological cooperation with the US.

"I'd like to present a vision for the future of AI and propose global cooperation to make it happen," Lee said.

Lee separately met with Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei and Broadcom CEO Hock Tan, before joining the summit.

Samsung Electronics Executive Chairman Jay Y Lee, SK Group Chairman Chey Tae-won, Hyundai Motor Group Executive Chair Euisun Chung and Naver founder Lee Hae-jin also attended.

Republic of Korea has announced $950bn in new AI initiatives involving Samsung Electronics, SK Group and US tech firms as global AI leaders rush to fill a shortage of faster chips to power and develop more advanced systems

Nvidia and Korea's SK Group unveiled a new AI initiative valued at $500bn spanning large-scale AI data centers and next-generation memory.

The initiative includes a long-term partnership with SK Hynix to secure next-generation memory supply for Nvidia and jointly develop high-bandwidth memory for AI training, AI agents and physical AI applications.

As part of the agreement, SK Telecom plans to build a 2-gigawatt data center powered by Vera Rubin chips and SK Hynix's HBM4 high-bandwidth (HBM) memory chips. The data center is due online in 2027. Samsung Electronics said it will work with Broadcom on the development of its next-generation AI accelerator based on Samsung's HBM technology and provide it with sub-2-nanometer foundry process and advanced packaging solutions.

SK Chairman Chey said AI customers were seeking far more memory than previously anticipated, pointing to recent discussions with Nvidia, Anthropic, OpenAI and Broadcom.

Chey said Nvidia's projected memory requirement over the next five years could soon prove to be higher.

"I wouldn't be surprised if, the next time I see (Huang), he'll tell me those figures were too low and say, 'I want more,'" Chey said.

He said Broadcom CEO Hock Tan also told him the company's memory demand was likely to surpass available supply, and that Anthropic was regularly checking on future chip availability as it moves beyond developing AI models to building computing capacity. Chey said OpenAI would require enormous computing power and had urged SK to supply chips directly to the ChatGPT maker.

The SK Group chairman also said Anthropic was making its own "computing power" without elaborating, potentially referring to a plan reported by Reuters that the AI lab is exploring the possibility of designing its own chips.

An Anthropic spokesperson said the startup was always exploring options and drawing on a range of compute for a diversified approach to computing.

Anthropic CEO Amodei made no comment on the reported plan, saying the company had signed supply deals with Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix, without providing further details.

In May, Anthropic raised funding at a post-money valuation of $965bn, naming Samsung Electronics, SK Hynix and Micron as partners whose technologies play a critical role in the supply of memory, storage and logic chips.

Europe's electrification dream faces a painful decade

By Ron Bousso
London

Europe faces a looming "death valley" of high energy costs over the next decade that threatens to erode its industrial base, even if its ambitious new plan to double electricity consumption by 2040 materialises.

The European Commission on Friday unveiled an Electrification Action Plan aimed at increasing electricity's share of final energy consumption from around 23% today to 46% by 2040, with an interim reference target of 32% by 2030.

The strategy seeks to accelerate the electrification of transport, buildings and industry, while tackling one of Europe's biggest energy paradoxes - electricity is often more expensive than the fossil fuels policymakers want consumers and businesses to abandon.

The Commission argues that turning Europe into the world's first "electro-continent" would dramatically reduce fossil fuel consumption and cut the bloc's energy import bill by as much as €260bn ($297bn) a year by 2040.

At a time when energy security has become a geopolitical priority, the appeal is obvious. But so too is the challenge.

Europe still runs overwhelmingly on fossil fuels. Oil, gas and coal account for more than 60% of the EU's overall energy mix, while renewables make up only about one-fifth.

While the continent has rapidly expanded renewable power generation at huge cost, it has made far less progress in electrifying the sectors that consume the most energy, particularly transport, industry and heating.

So even though Europe is steadily decarbonising electricity generation, electricity itself remains only a minority of total energy use. The share of electricity in total energy consumption has remained stubbornly steady at around 23% for over a decade.

The disconnect highlights the scale of the task ahead, an undertaking that could very well determine the viability of European industry for the next decade.

The urgency of accelerating that shift was underscored by the energy crisis that followed Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The loss of abundant Russian pipeline gas forced Europe into a painful and expensive energy realignment, as it had to replace cheap imports from the east with costlier liquefied natural gas from global markets.

The consequences for industry have been profound. The surge in energy prices triggered a prolonged contraction in industrial activity as manufacturers from chemicals and fertilisers to metals and glass struggled to compete with rivals in regions benefiting from cheaper energy, most notably Asia.

Europe remains acutely exposed to swings in fossil-fuel markets. Since the start of the Iran war in late February, the region's oil and gas import bill has risen by around €50bn, according to the European Commission, adding fresh inflationary pressure.

To reduce energy costs, the Commission has proposed a broad package of measures aimed at narrowing the price gap between electricity and gas.

These include reducing network charges, rolling out smart meters, making electric vehicles more affordable, expanding charging infrastructure, and accelerating the replacement of gas boilers with heat pumps. A key pillar of the strategy is an overhaul of the EU's Emissions Trading System, the bloc's flagship climate policy.

The proposed reforms would give industries more time to reduce emissions while providing greater financial support for investment in clean technologies and domestic manufacturing.

But the scale of investment required is daunting.

The Commission recently estimated that upgrading and expanding Europe's ageing transmission and distribution networks will require around €1.2tn of investment by 2040.

Programmes designed to encourage electrification in transport, industry and buildings will likely necessitate tens of billions more.

There are some reasons for optimism, however.

Europe already spends roughly €60bn-€70bn annually on power grids, according to the International Energy Agency, meaning reaching the Commission's investment target would not require a wholesale transformation of existing investment trends.

Moreover, additional funding could be unlocked through the proposed easing of ETS requirements, which could allow companies to redirect capital toward modernising infrastructure and production facilities.

The Commission also wants member states to dedicate half of ETS revenues to decarbonising domestic industry.

Since 2013, the carbon market has generated roughly €260bn in revenues.

But even factoring in all this, the uptick in investment required remains intimidating.

That's especially true given that European governments are simultaneously under pressure to increase defence spending in response to growing security threats from Russia and demands from Washington for Nato members to contribute more.

The biggest problem of all may be timing.

Even if the plan survives the political battles ahead - no certainty, given the divergent priorities of the bloc's 27 member states - the benefits will materialise only gradually. Building grids, charging networks, heat pumps, batteries and industrial infrastructure takes years.

Europe's industrial competitiveness challenge, by contrast, is immediate.

European electricity prices remain more than twice those in the US and roughly 50% higher than in China, leaving energy-intensive industries at a structural disadvantage even after the retreat from the extreme highs reached during the 2022 energy crisis.

For most of the next decade, Europe will have to find a way to keep energy-intensive industries competitive against its rivals in Asia and North America, while also expanding electricity-hungry sectors such as artificial intelligence and data centres.

That is the uncomfortable reality at the heart of Europe's electrification strategy.

Electrifying the continent is no longer merely a climate ambition. For a region with limited domestic fossil-fuel resources, chronic exposure to geopolitical energy shocks, and increasingly expensive fuel imports, it has become an economic necessity.

The question is whether Europe's industries can survive long enough to reap the benefits.

■ *Ron Bousso is a columnist for Reuters. The opinions expressed are those of the author.*

British firms report their first growth in three months

Reuters
London

British firms reported their first growth in three months in July, helped by a brief respite in the Iran war, and were the most upbeat since the conflict began, according to a survey that may provide early encouragement for new Prime Minister Andy Burnham.

The S&P Global UK Composite Purchasing Managers' Index rose to 52.1 from 49.3 in June, according to a provisional estimate, the strongest reading since February and above all forecasts in a Reuters poll that pointed to only a small improvement to 49.7.

Readings above 50.0 indicate growth in activity, while those below that level point to contraction. S&P's services flash PMI rose to 51.8 from 48.8, its strongest since April, while the manufacturing equivalent rose to 52.8 from 52.5.

Chris Williamson, S&P Global Market Intelligence's chief business economist, said hospitality firms benefited from hot weather, the soccer World Cup and people opting to holiday in Britain as high costs and uncertainty deterred overseas travel.

Services and manufacturing businesses reported the combined weakest input price inflation since February, helped by lower fuel and raw material costs as a brief de-escalation in the Gulf conflict reduced oil prices before tensions flared up again.

"Price pressures cooled thanks to the lower oil prices seen during the first half of the month, which could strengthen speculation that the Bank of England will hold off raising interest rates," Williamson said. The BoE is expected to hold interest rates at 3.75% next week as it assesses the impact of the conflict.

"However, inflationary pressures clearly remain elevated, as the ongoing energy shock and supply squeeze from the war in the Middle East continues to add to existing business cost pressures from earlier government policies," Williamson said.

The survey's employment measure has declined continuously since the first budget of former finance minister Rachel Reeves in 2024 which included a rise in social security contributions paid by employers.

Business optimism about the year ahead was the highest since February with companies citing relief from geopolitical tensions and the drop in oil prices in the first part of July. But the more recent re-escalation in tensions risks derailing the easing in cost pressures, S&P said.

While some firms also pointed to a boost from AI investment spending, others were concerned about the broader UK economic outlook and elevated domestic business uncertainty. Burnham has offered more support to households and businesses since becoming prime minister on Monday, announcing a cut in business rates for many hospitality firms, a cap on bus fares and the removal of tax on domestic electricity bills.

The GfK consumer confidence index, published separately on Friday, showed consumers have this month become the most optimistic since January on hopes of a turnaround in the economy.

US stocks face tests from Fed decision and earnings deluge

Reuters
New York

A wobbly US stock market will take its cues in the coming week from a Federal Reserve meeting set to shed light on the path for interest rates, and from a packed slate of corporate earnings led by technology companies and heavyweights in artificial intelligence.

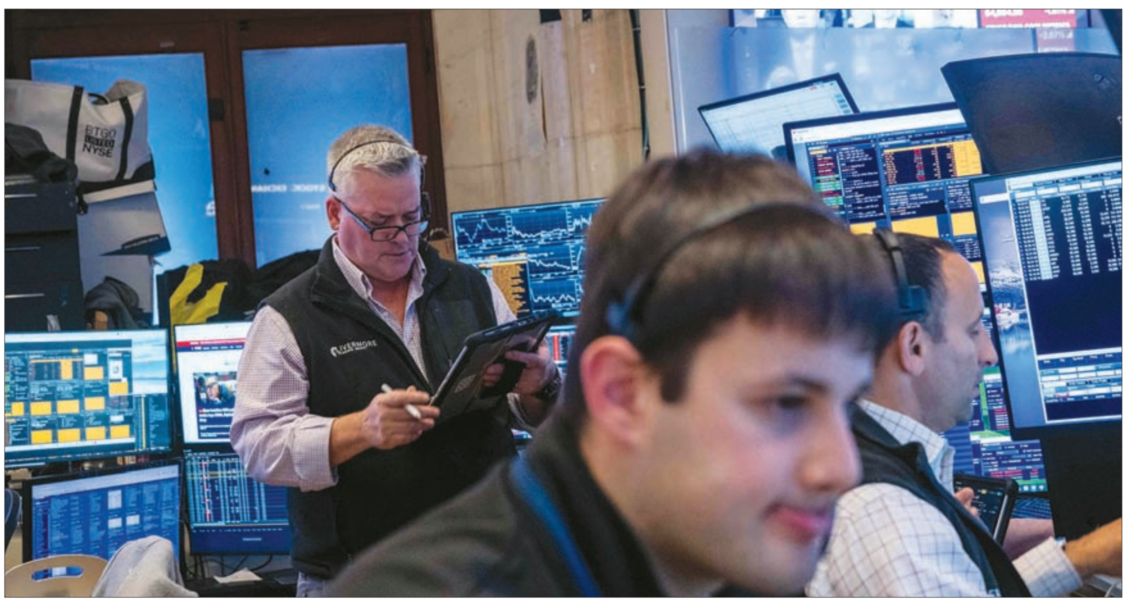
Major equity indexes were on track for weekly declines, dragged down on Thursday by steep slides in Alphabet and Tesla following their quarterly reports. The fallout for Google parent Alphabet, sparked in part by an increase in its already massive AI spending plans, set a negative tone ahead of results next week from other AI "hyperscalers": Microsoft, Amazon and Meta Platforms.

AI-related stocks have been at the heart of equity market gains this year, helping drive the bull market near to its fourth year. Despite this week's stumble, the benchmark S&P 500 is still up 8% in 2026, while the market "feels very frothy," said Kristina Hooper, chief market strategist at Man Group.

"Investors are, to a certain extent, walking on eggshells," Hooper said. "And they're more likely to react negatively to any signs of imperfection." Meanwhile, the Fed meeting comes as oil prices have shot up due to escalating tensions in the Middle East. Brent crude hit $100 a barrel on Thursday.

That has fanned fears that policymakers will need to be more aggressive in raising rates to control inflation, which consistently has run well above the Fed's 2% annual target.

The central bank was expected to hold rates steady when it gives its monetary policy statement on Wednesday, with Fed fund futures on Thursday afternoon pricing in a 36% chance of a quarter-percentage-point rate increase, according to LSEG data. But there was still some uncertainty on Wall Street over whether the Fed, whose new chair, Kevin Warsh, is overhauling monetary policy communication, might surprise markets.


Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. A wobbly US stock market will take its cues in the coming week from a Federal Reserve meeting set to shed light on the path for interest rates, and from a packed slate of corporate earnings led by technology companies and heavyweights in artificial intelligence.

"The possibility of a shock rate hike cannot be ruled out entirely," BNP Paribas economists said in a note this week. The meeting will be the second under Warsh, who has shunned forward guidance while vowing to bring inflation down to target.

"He's really not showing the Fed's cards," said Paul Nolte, senior wealth advisor and market strategist at Murphy & Sylvest Wealth Management.

Even if the central bank holds rates steady on Wednesday, investors will look for hints about the future path of rates in the policy statement and Warsh's ensuing press conference.

Fed funds futures are factoring in two quarter-point rate hikes by the January 2027 meeting. "If you get the feeling that there are more committee members that are moving towards these multi-hike scenarios over the balance of the year, then I think that's going to be a problem for the market," said Scott Wren, senior global market strategist at the Wells Fargo Investment Institute.

Higher interest rates raise borrowing costs for consumers and companies, slowing the economy and often weighing on stocks.

They can also translate into higher Treasury yields, which already have been rising in recent weeks, creating competition for equities. The benchmark 10-year Treasury yield topped 4.7% on Thursday, reaching its highest level since early 2025. Yields move opposite to the price of bonds.

Investors also get a series of updates on the US economy next week, with reports due on second-quarter gross domestic product, monthly inflation and consumer sentiment.

About one-third of S&P 500 companies are expected to post results, making it the busiest week of the second-quarter reporting season, including Apple, Visa, Chevron and Coca-Cola.

With more than 80 companies having reported as of Wednesday, S&P 500 second-quarter earnings were on track to post a 26.5% increase on last year, according to LSEG IBES -- a huge profit boost that Wall Street had been anticipating and incorporating into stock prices ahead of earnings. AI spending has been a central driver of stock prices in 2026, boosting semiconductor firms and companies involved in building data centers and other infrastructure.

But there have also been increasing investor concerns about whether the big spenders will recoup their massive investments. That issue arose with Alphabet's report and could play into how investors react next week to quarterly reports from Microsoft, Amazon and Meta.

Nestle siphons off bottled water business into JV

AFP
Zurich

Swiss giant Nestle said it will transfer its bottled water brands into a joint venture, two-and-a-half years after a scandal over prohibited treatments used in its natural mineral waters such as Perrier.

Nestle said in a statement that it would transfer the business -- which covers other iconic brands like San Pellegrino -- into a company called Peranel, which would be jointly owned by US investment firm Platinum Equity.

Peranel will span more than 30 brands in 120 countries.

"As an independent company focused exclusively on water and premium beverages, Peranel will have full flexibility to invest in its brands and pursue growth opportunities," the Swiss food giant said.

"By partnering with Platinum Equity, Peranel will be better positioned to execute its strategy with enhanced agility," said Nestle's chief executive Philipp Navratil. "It is an important moment for the teams, a moment of change, a moment when we are looking to the future with many opportunities," said Nestle Waters CEO Muriel Lienau, who will head the new venture.

"This partnership brings together a bit of the best of both worlds: on the one hand, continuity with Nestle, which remains a major shareholder, and at the same time fresh momentum from Platinum, which is genuinely committed to investing and speeding up the next phase of growth," she told AFP in an interview.

The Nestle logo in front of the Nestle Waters bottling plant in Vittel, France. The Swiss giant said it will transfer its bottled water brands into a joint venture, two-and-a-half years after a scandal over prohibited treatments used in its natural mineral waters such as Perrier.

France's mineral water companies came under the spotlight a few years ago following media revelations about illicit filtration systems widely used in the industry.

In 2024, an investigation by Le Monde and Radio France revealed that at least a third of mineral water sold in France had been illegally treated, either with ultra-violet light, carbon filters or ultra-fine micro-meshes commonly used to screen out bacteria. Under EU law, "natural mineral water" is supposed to be unaltered between the underground source and the bottle.

Nestle said that the latest transaction values Peranel at 4.9bn euros, which will generate around 3bn euros in cash proceeds for the food giant.

Nestle also published its earnings for the first six months of 2026.

In the period from January to June, the food giant -- which owns more than 2,000 brands, including Nespresso coffee pods and Maggi bouillon cubes -- generated sales of 43.1bn Swiss francs ($52.9bn), down 2.5% from a year earlier.

Net profit fell 31.4% to 3.5bn francs, due to restructuring costs and asset write-downs on holdings earmarked for disposal, Nestle said.

Meta quits clean energy pledge

AFP
Washington

Meta has abandoned a global pledge by leading companies to source all of their electricity from renewable sources, the social media giant confirmed on Friday. RE100, an initiative of the UK-based nonprofit Climate Group, aims to spur corporate climate action, and counts Apple, Google and Microsoft among its 444 members.

The Climate Group's website no longer lists Meta, the company behind Facebook and Instagram, as a member.

The news was first reported by Recharge News, a renewable energy industry outlet.

Meta joined the pledge in 2016 according to a Wayback Machine archive of RE100's website.

The departure comes amid a frenzied data center buildout by leading tech companies. Meta has struck deals paying utilities to bring new natural gas power plants online, including 10 to power its Hyperion data center in Louisiana alone.

A Meta spokesperson told AFP the company is continuing to scale up investments in renewable energy, and that leaving RE100 does not change its goal of matching its electricity use with 100% clean energy.

It has met that goal on an annualised basis since 2020, according to its website, by partnering with renewable energy providers on long-term power purchase agreements.

But the Climate Group told Recharge News that was no longer enough.

"After several in-depth conversations between Meta and Climate Group, Meta has withdrawn from the RE100 initiative, as it is no longer able to meet the technical criteria due to investments made in new gas power," a Climate Group spokesperson told the website.

Natural gas has long been billed as a "bridge fuel" between dirtier polluting fossil fuels and renewables such as wind and solar.

While its emissions are lower, drilling and extracting it causes the leakage of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas and the main component of natural gas.

Burning natural gas also causes significant air pollution in the form of nitric oxides, sulfur, mercury and particulates, while hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," can contaminate ground water supplies.

Anthropic slashes AI costs with high-efficiency model launch

AFP
San Francisco


Anthropic logo, a keyboard, and a robotic hand in an illustration. Anthropic on Friday released Claude Opus 5, a new artificial intelligence model the company says approaches the performance of its most powerful system at half the price.

Anthropic on Friday released Claude Opus 5, a new artificial intelligence model the company says approaches the performance of its most powerful system at half the price.

The San Francisco-based startup, a chief rival to OpenAI, said the model tops industry benchmarks for coding and knowledge work while consuming fewer computing resources than earlier versions.

The claim addressed the rising concerns of business customers who have balked at the expense of running advanced AI systems.

Claude competes with OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini, and customers pay based on the amount of work performed, measured in units called tokens.

Opus 5 costs $5 per million input tokens and $25 per million output tokens, half the price of Fable 5, Anthropic's most expensive publicly available offering.

The company said the new model performs close to Fable 5 across many tasks despite the lower cost. Cost has becomes a major issue after Anthropic and its archrival OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, both filed for stock market listings in June.

Wall Street is scrutinising their business performance more closely than ever ahead of their market debuts.

On cybersecurity, Anthropic said it deliberately avoided training Opus 5 on cyber tasks, and that the model remains behind Mythos 5 -- its most capable and most tightly restricted system, available only to select partners -- on both offensive cyber work and biological research capabilities that could be misused.

Mythos is Anthropic's most advanced series of AI models, and their strength at finding weaknesses in computer systems -- and at turning those weaknesses into working attacks -- has caused controversy and pushed the company to build tight guardrails around them.

The company said Opus 5 finds software flaws about as well as Mythos 5 but lags far behind in turning those flaws into something that could be weaponised into an attack.

Citing the reduced risk, Anthropic said its automated safety filters will intervene roughly 85 percent less often on Opus 5 than on Fable 5, the Mythos-class model it released last month.

Fable 5 and Mythos 5 were briefly pulled from public access in June after the US Commerce Department imposed export controls, which were lifted at the end of that month.

Europe shares gain as SAP lifts tech stocks

SAP jumps after cloud backlog growth beats estimates; Neste, Securitas drop after Q2 core profit miss; Volkswagen scraps its revenue growth forecast after profit falls

Reuters
Frankfurt

European shares rose on Friday after registering their steepest one-day loss in two weeks in the previous session, as investors drew comfort from some corporate earnings and assessed the impact higher oil prices could have on monetary policy.

The pan-European STOXX 600 index edged 0.6% higher to 644.67, rising for the second straight week. Germany's DAX rose as SAP gained 10% after the software group reported second-quarter current cloud backlog growth ahead of analyst expectations.

The broader technology index added 1.7%, reclaiming some lost ground after quarterly updates from STMicroelectronics and BE Semiconductor failed to impress investors on Thursday.

Investors have been trying to balance AI-driven growth against stretched valuations and returns from hefty investments in the technology, leading to swings in share prices in the sector of late.

"The two big problems for the big tech companies are that capex is no longer being funded out of free cash flow alone and that cheaper open-source AI is seriously threatening business models," said Deutsche Bank analysts led by Jim Reid.

The STOXX 600 technology sector is up nearly 17% so far this year, just behind energy stocks that have surged about 32%.

On Friday, oil and gas stocks failed to capitalise on Brent crude prices that remained over $100 a barrel, as a 6.4% drop in Neste weighed on sentiment after the Finnish biofuel maker and oil refiner reported second-quarter core profit slightly below expectations.

"We've moved from pricing in a period of weak growth and higher inflation to potentially even recession. We're not quite there yet... but we could get to that point very quickly," said Chris Beauchamp, chief market analyst at IG. The European Central Bank may need to raise interest rates again as inflation risks ran high, three policymakers said on Friday, after the bank left rates steady on Thursday but kept a September hike on the table.

Markets are still pricing in a 25-basis-point increase and about a 70% chance of another similar hike by the end of 2026, according to LSEG-compiled data.

Meanwhile, the US administration imposed new tariffs of 10% and 12.5% on goods from 60 trading partners, over allegations of lax enforcement of forced labour bans, just as a temporary 10% global tariff expired.

Among other stocks, Volkswagen dipped about 1% after the carmaker dropped its previous revenue growth forecast following a 9.5% slump in second-quarter profit.

Valmet soared 22% and was on track for its biggest one-day jump on record after the pulp, paper and energy technology company posted second-quarter results ahead of expectations and announced a potential business separation.

Sweden's Securitas slid 11% and was set for its steepest one-day drop since August 2006 after the security services provider reported a lower-than-expected second-quarter core profit.


The German share price index DAX graph is pictured at the stock exchange in Frankfurt. European shares rose on Friday after registering their steepest one-day loss in two weeks in the previous session.

Musk's Boring Co targets $20bn valuation

Reuters
New York

Elon Musk's tunnel construction startup, the Boring Company, is in talks to raise new funding that would value it at about $20bn, the Wall Street Journal said on Friday, citing people familiar with the talks.

Musk, whose business interests include Tesla, SpaceX and Neuralink, founded the company to develop tunneling technology and transport systems to carry passenger pods through underground, low-pressure tubes between cities.

The company is in talks to raise about $4bn, WSJ said, adding that the funding round had not yet closed, and terms could still change.

Reuters could not immediately verify the report. The Boring Company could not immediately be reached for comment outside regular business hours.

The Boring Company was valued at $5.7bn in 2022 after a $675mn fundraising exercise.

In the United States, it runs the Vegas Loop in Las Vegas, Nevada, which began transporting passengers in 2021. On its website, the company says the system has carried more than 3mn passengers through its eight stations.

Last year, the company and Dubai's Road and Transport Authority signed an initial pact to build the Dubai Loop, an underground high-speed transport network spanning 17 km (11 miles).

Why low junk bond spreads are an analytical illusion

By Marty Fridson
New York

Credit spreads on so-called "junk bonds" may appear slim compared to historical averages. But that says more about the analytical method being used than the fair value of these instruments.

As their more appropriate name - high-yield bonds - suggests, these speculative-grade bonds offer investors more current cash income than fixed income instruments with higher credit ratings. But they also have more downside potential during tough economic times because of the elevated default risk.

One number that debt managers consider when determining their high yield weighting is the average spread versus Treasuries. Simply stated, that's the amount of extra yield investors receive for accepting the risk of speculative-grade bonds rather than the so-called risk-free asset.

From 1997-2025, the monthly average spread was 5.23 percentage points, based on the Option-Adjusted Spread (OAS) of the ICE BofA US High Yield Index. On July 21, the spread was roughly half that at 2.69 percentage points.

So does that mean high-yield spreads are too thin?

Let's first consider the traditional analytical approach. As Investopedia - a decent source for conventional financial wisdom - notes, "The high-yield bond spread is most useful in a historical context, as investors want to know how wide the spread is today compared to the average spreads in the past. If the spread is too narrow today, many savvy investors will avoid buying into junk bonds."

There's a fundamental flaw in this reasoning, however. The high yield spread is a risk premium. If risk is higher than average at a given time, the risk premium should be greater than average as well. Determining whether high-yield bonds as a class are currently rich or cheap requires a comparison of the spread with the prevailing risk.

There's one further problem with comparing the US high-yield index's spread with its historical average. Over time, the index's composition has shifted to a lower risk profile.

Currently, the lowest-quality tier, with ratings of CCC or below, accounts for just 10% of the index's total face value amount. Ten years ago, the comparable figure was 16%. Secured bonds, which provide a higher recovery rate in the event of default than unsecured bonds, have doubled over that period, from 18% to 37% of the total face value amount.

These changes don't mean that, for example, the average BB unsecured bond is either riskier or less risky than in the past. But because of the dramatic improvement in the quality of bonds in the index, you'll see a narrower average spread, based on a fair value analysis, than you did in earlier times, all else being equal.

By failing to account for either the present level of credit risk or the change over time in the index's composition, adherents of the historical average method will conclude that the high-yield bond category is currently drastically overvalued.

But when using a fair value model that takes into account credit availability, economic conditions, and Treasury yields, you get a dramatically different message.

After taking all of these factors into account, my analysis puts the fair value spread of today's high-yield market at 2.66 percentage points.

That is to say, the high-yield index - with its current OAS of 2.69 percentage points - is currently priced roughly where it should be - or, to be more precise, a bit wider than my model estimates. That means you're actually earning more yield, on average, than the risk level necessitates.

Let me hasten to add that the spread should get a great deal wider once the next recession approaches. In that environment, credit conditions should tighten, economic indicators should weaken, and Treasury yields should decline. Based on historical norms, the high-yield spread could increase to 10 percentage points - or even higher.

That would obviously put the index's yield far above the current 6.97%, producing a deeply negative total return on high-yield bonds.

Does that mean investors should avoid high-yield bonds if they think a recession is coming? Not necessarily.

Investment-grade bonds, rated BBB or higher, also typically go into the red during recessions.

Even Treasury bonds, as measured by the ICE BofA US Treasury Index, have inflicted negative returns on investors in 37% of quarters from 1997 onward, though this was not usually when there was a recession but during periods when interest rates were rising.

Of course, you could have completely avoided interim losses by owning only three-month Treasury bills. From 1997 through 2025, those super-steady instruments produced a 2.32% annualised return. But given that this is less than the period's 2.66% average inflation rate, you would have been in the red on a real basis.

Most investors would probably prefer the 1997-2025 average annual returns of 3.84% on Treasuries, 5.10% on investment-grade corporates, and 6.45% on high-yield bonds. "Junk bonds" will assuredly have their share of down quarters. But that's no reason to avoid them entirely, especially at times when they appear to offer fair value for the risk.

■ *Marty Fridson is the publisher of Income Securities Investor. The views expressed here are those of the author.*

QNB FINANCIAL SERVICES

Weekly Market Report

The Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) declined by 70.74 points or 0.7% to 10,032.48 vs. the previous week. Market capitalisation declined by 1.1% to QR601.9bn from QR608.8bn at the end of the previous trading week.

Of the 54 companies traded, 17 ended higher, two were unchanged, while 35 ended lower. Dlala (DIBS) was the best performing stock for the week, rising 22.6%. Meanwhile, Zad Holding (ZHCD) was the worst performing stock for the week, decreasing 7.4%.

QNB Group (QNBK), Nakilat (QGTS) and Qatar International Islamic Bank (QIIK) were the main contributors to the weekly index decline, shaving off 64.40, 21.94 and 8.71 points from the index, respectively.

Traded value during the week climbed 268.9% to QR1,716.3mn vs. QR465.2mn in the prior trading week. QNBK was the top value stock traded during the week with total traded value of QR276.2mn.

Traded volume jumped 339.0% to 642.8mn shares compared with 146.4mn shares in the prior trading week. The number of transactions rose by 1,274.5% to 167,271 vs. 12,170 in the prior week. Baladna (BLDN) was the top volume stock traded during the week with total traded volume of 78.1mn shares.

Foreign institutions turned bearish, ending the week with net selling of QR65.6mn vs. net buying of QR11.3mn in the prior week. Qatari institutions remained bullish with net buying of QR54.7mn vs. net buying of QR6.0mn in the week before. Foreign retail investors ended the week with net buying of QR1.3mn vs. net selling of QR2.3mn in the prior week. Qatari retail investors ended the week with net buying of QR9.6mn vs. net selling of QR14.9mn.

Global foreign institutions remained net sellers of Qatari equities by $76.6mn YTD, while GCC institutions remained net sellers by $24.2mn.

DISCLAIMER

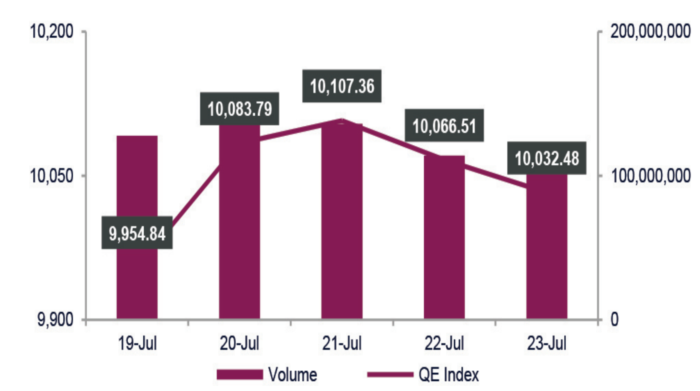
Market Indicators	Week ended. July 23, 2026	Week ended. July 12, 2026	Chg. %
Value Traded (QR mn)	1,716.3	465.2	268.9
Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn)	601,901.4	608,820.6	(1.1)
Volume (mn)	642.8	146.4	339.0
Number of Transactions	167,271	12,170	1,274.5
Companies Traded	54	53	1.9
Market Breadth	17:35	19:26	–

Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Market Indices	Close	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%
Total Return	24,791.55	(0.7)	(2.0)	(3.7)
ALL Share Index	3,925.80	(1.0)	(2.2)	(3.3)
Banks and Financial Services	4,965.27	(1.5)	(2.6)	(5.3)
Industrials	4,055.62	(0.1)	(1.7)	(2.0)
Transportation	5,150.72	(2.5)	(3.7)	(5.8)
Real Estate	1,424.71	(1.9)	(2.5)	(6.8)
Insurance	2,715.89	1.0	0.2	8.6
Telecoms	2,457.10	2.5	1.2	10.2
Consumer Goods & Services	7,969.71	(2.2)	(2.6)	(4.3)
Al Rayan Islamic Index	5,089.21	0.1	(1.4)	(0.5)

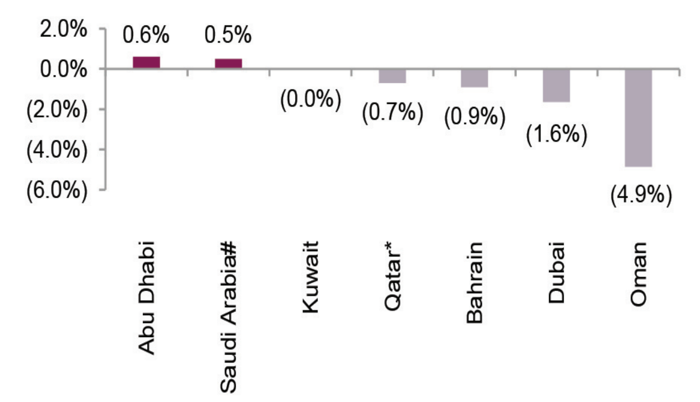
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

QSE Index and Volume



Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Weekly Index Performance



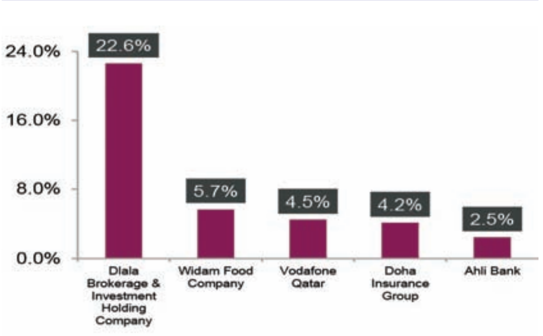
Source: Bloomberg

Regional Indices	Close	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%	Weekly Exchange Traded Value ($ mn)	Exchange Mkt. Cap. ($ mn)	TTM P/E**	P/B**	Dividend Yield
Qatar*	10,032.48	(0.7)	(2.0)	(6.8)	470.92	165,101.5	11.5	1.3	5.0
Dubai	5,799.04	(1.6)	(2.6)	(4.1)	452.41	259,941.7	9.1	1.7	5.5
Abu Dhabi	9,840.64	0.6	0.4	(1.5)	1,005.27	751,109.0	19.3	2.3	2.6
Saudi Arabia#	10,775.46	0.5	(0.2)	2.7	4,777.75	2,575,088.3	16.8	2.1	3.5
Kuwait	8,661.58	(0.0)	(0.5)	(2.8)	1,058.08	166,270.5	17.6	1.8	3.8
Oman	7,117.20	(4.9)	(5.2)	21.3	462.44	53,791.9	12.5	1.5	4.3
Bahrain	1,966.83	(0.9)	(3.7)	(4.8)	20.47	20,178.9	16.3	1.3	4.5

Source: Bloomberg

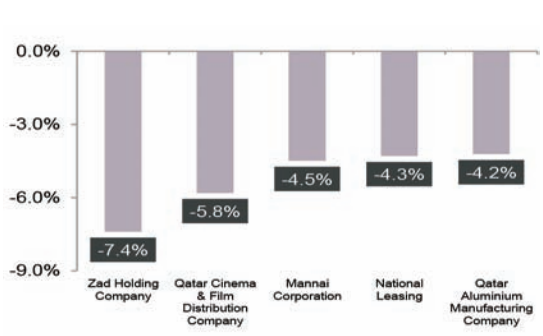
Qatar Stock Exchange

Top Five Gainers



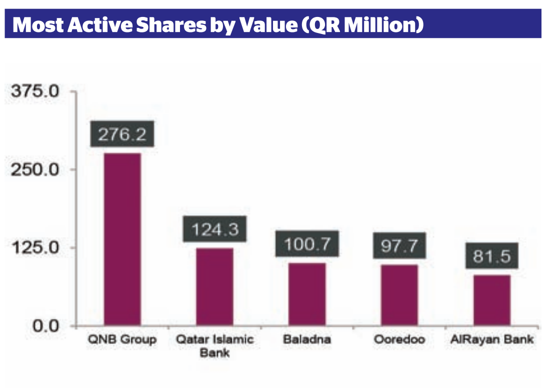
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Top Five Decliners



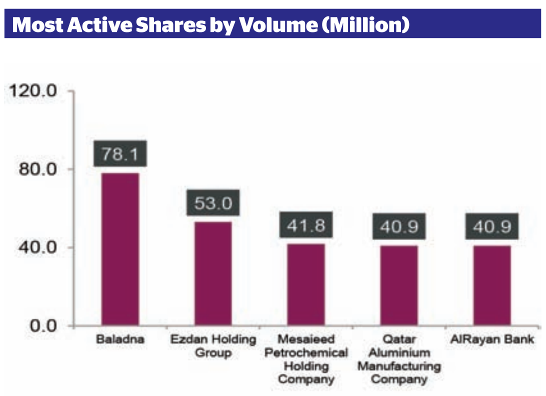
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Most Active Shares by Value (QR Million)



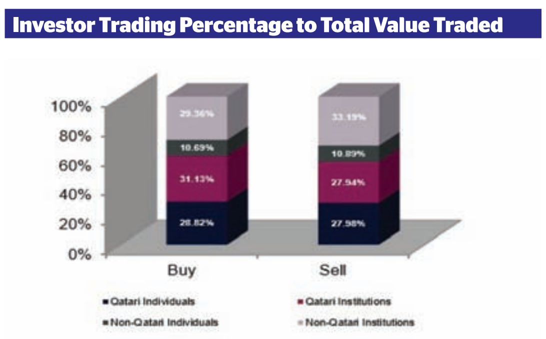
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Most Active Shares by Volume (Million)



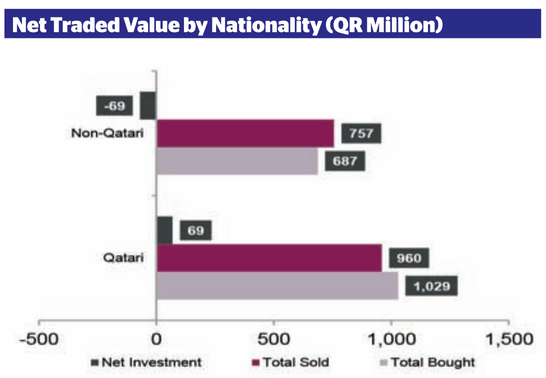
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Investor Trading Percentage to Total Value Traded



Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Net Traded Value by Nationality (QR Million)



Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Company Name	Last Price	% Change Weekly	% Change YTD	Market Cap. QR Million	TTM P/E	P/B	Div. Yield
Qatar National Bank	16.50	(4.18)	(11.58)	152,401	9.4	1.4	4.4
Qatar Islamic Bank	21.60	1.27	(9.81)	51,039	11.0	1.7	4.2
Commercial Bank of Qatar	4.03	(0.25)	(4.05)	16,310	8.6	0.8	7.4
Doha Bank	2.90	1.43	1.05	8,991	10.0	0.8	5.2
Al Ahli Bank	4.07	2.49	8.54	10,381	11.6	1.4	6.1
Qatar International Islamic Bank	10.99	(1.61)	(3.85)	16,635	13.1	2.0	4.8
Al Rayan Bank	1.97	(1.50)	(10.21)	18,321	13.6	0.8	5.6
Lesha Bank	2.87	0.49	54.41	3,217	13.3	2.1	2.1
National Leasing	0.69	(4.29)	0.58	342	15.7	0.6	5.8
Dlala Holding	1.71	22.61	74.46	325	135.6	1.8	N/A
Qatar & Oman Investment	0.77	(0.77)	(16.71)	139	N/A	0.8	N/A
Islamic Holding Group	2.76	(3.94)	(13.66)	156	78.4	0.9	1.6
Dukhan Bank	3.39	1.41	(3.03)	17,744	13.2	1.3	4.7
Banking and Financial Services				**296,002**			
Zad Holding	12.65	(7.39)	(8.93)	3,636	15.6	1.9	5.4
Qatar German Co. for Medical Devices	1.29	(2.49)	(11.75)	149	14.5	N/A	N/A
Salam International Investment	0.77	(1.66)	6.06	880	8.5	0.6	7.8
Baladna	1.29	0.00	0.86	2,452	5.5	0.9	N/A
Medicare Group	5.68	(3.69)	(14.31)	1,599	18.6	1.6	3.9
Qatar Cinema & Film Distribution	2.34	(5.81)	(2.67)	147	14.6	1.1	4.2
Qatar Fuel	13.86	(1.14)	(8.64)	13,780	14.1	1.6	6.5
Widam Food	1.56	5.71	4.22	280	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mannai Corp.	4.98	(4.49)	11.04	2,272	8.1	2.1	6.0
Al Meera Consumer Goods	13.19	(0.53)	(9.47)	2,717	21.0	1.7	3.0
Mekdam Holding Group	2.15	(2.54)	(2.59)	365	9.5	1.5	6.5
Meeza QSTP	3.14	(3.94)	(7.59)	2,038	30.7	2.9	2.7
Al Faleh Education Holding	0.56	(3.45)	(18.27)	134	8.3	0.5	2.2
Al Mahhar Holding	2.06	(2.74)	(6.03)	426	8.6	1.1	7.3
Mosanada Facility Management Services	8.54	0.46	(10.12)	598	N/A	4.1	0.6
Consumer Goods and Services				**31,474**			
Qatar Industrial Manufacturing	2.19	(0.86)	(7.05)	1,040	8.0	0.5	5.9
Qatar National Cement	2.75	0.22	(0.33)	1,798	17.9	0.6	8.0
Industries Qatar	10.97	1.01	(8.05)	66,369	16.5	1.8	6.5
Qatari Investors Group	1.34	(1.97)	(8.71)	1,668	11.9	0.6	7.5
Nebras Energy	14.40	(1.50)	(4.32)	15,840	11.6	1.0	5.2
Aamal	0.74	(3.14)	(12.22)	4,662	10.8	0.5	6.8
Gulf International Services	1.93	(3.98)	(24.46)	3,587	6.7	0.8	5.2
Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding	1.14	1.06	4.48	14,347	41.5	0.9	3.7
Estithmar Holding	4.24	1.19	26.13	19,034	16.6	3.6	N/A
Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing	1.50	(4.21)	(6.25)	8,370	10.2	1.2	6.7
Industrials				**136,714**			
Qatar Insurance	2.00	1.21	(1.86)	6,539	11.6	1.0	5.5
QLM Life & Medical Insurance	2.20	(0.81)	(12.08)	769	12.0	1.1	4.5
Doha Insurance	2.95	4.17	14.85	1,474	7.3	1.1	6.3
Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance	1.97	(1.01)	27.34	1,724	12.3	0.5	2.5
Al Khaleej Takaful Insurance	2.94	(1.97)	29.04	750	10.5	1.3	5.1
Qatar Islamic Insurance	8.30	(1.51)	(6.16)	1,245	8.6	2.1	6.0
Damaan Islamic Insurance Company	4.40	2.06	1.17	880	9.1	1.5	5.7
Insurance				**13,380**			
United Development	0.84	(3.56)	(8.00)	2,974	7.3	0.3	6.5
Barwa Real Estate	2.31	(0.86)	(11.70)	8,989	7.2	0.4	7.8
Ezdan Real Estate	0.83	(2.36)	(21.83)	21,936	183.0	0.6	N/A
Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Development	0.55	(1.08)	(4.36)	548	15.5	0.5	N/A
Real Estate				**34,447**			
Ooredoo	13.40	1.90	2.84	42,923	11.0	1.5	5.6
Vodafone Qatar	2.68	4.52	10.14	11,341	15.3	2.3	4.5
Telecoms				**54,264**			
Qatar Navigation (Milaha)	9.93	(0.74)	(7.84)	11,278	9.5	0.6	4.5
Gulf Warehousing	2.24	0.00	0.04	131	11.3	0.5	4.5
Qatar Gas Transport (Nakilat)	4.10	(3.87)	(8.67)	22,715	13.4	1.6	3.5
Transportation				**34,124**			
Qatar Exchange				**601,901**			

Source: Bloomberg

Technical analysis of the QSE index

Source: Bloomberg

The index closed slightly down by 0.7% for this week and printed 10,032.5 last. The index has been in a down-leg for the past a few months and it reached the 10,000 support level. It is imperative for the index to stay above the psychological level and it could be a place to take some risk around here.

Definitions of key terms used in technical analysis

RSI (Relative Strength Index) indicator – RSI is a momentum oscillator that measures the speed and change of price movements. The RSI oscillates between 0 to 100. The index is deemed to be overbought once the RSI approaches the 70 level, indicating that a correction is likely. On the other hand, if the RSI approaches 30, it is an indication that the index may be getting oversold and therefore likely to bounce back.

MACD (Moving Average Convergence Divergence) indicator – The indicator consists of the MACD line and a signal line. The divergence or the convergence of the MACD line with the signal line indicates the strength in the momentum during the uptrend or downtrend, as the case may be. When the MACD crosses the signal line from below and trades above it, it gives a positive indication. The reverse is the situation for a bearish trend.

Candlestick chart – A candlestick chart is a price chart that displays the high, low, open, and close for a security. The 'body' of the chart is portion between the open and close price, while the high and low intraday movements form the 'shadow'. The candlestick may represent any time frame. We use a one-day candlestick chart (every candlestick represents one trading day) in our analysis.

WEEKLY ENERGY MARKET REVIEW

Oil declines as China pushes for end to US-Iran war

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Oil
Crude oil futures prices were more than 4% lower on Friday after sources said that China had initiated a push to resume stalled peace talks between the United States and Iran, but remained on track for hefty weekly gains.
Brent crude futures settled at $96.78, and US West Texas Intermediate crude (WTI) finished at $89.31. For the week, Brent rose 9.9%, while WTI rose 8.3%.
US President Donald Trump promised "major military punishment" for Iran and its Houthi allies after the strikes on two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea.
Iran had been pressing the Houthis to close the Bab el-Mandeb gateway to the Red Sea if the United States continues to attack Iranian power infrastructure. It is the second most important route for energy shipments after the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf.

Gas
Asia spot liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices rose for a fifth consecutive week to their highest in four months on fears of wider shipping disruptions, as Houthi attacks on Saudi oil tankers extended the Middle East war to a second major chokepoint.

The average LNG price for September delivery into northeast Asia was $22.00 per million British thermal units, up from $20.10 per mmBtu the week before.

Many of the shippers previously willing to do dark transits have paused. Transit conditions remain highly fluid, with no immediate path to de-escalation, keeping volatility and risk premiums firmly supported. In Europe, the Dutch TTF gas price settled at $21.12 per mmBtu, posting a weekly gain of 9.2%. Gas market remains tight and volatile amid supply uncertainty, while risks of shortages increase in Europe. Gas stocks are rising slowly, but remain below a reassuring level.

Crude oil futures prices were more than 4% lower on Friday after sources said that China had initiated a push to resume stalled peace talks between the United States and Iran, but remained on track for hefty weekly gains. *Picture supplied by the Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah International Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development.*

■ *This article was supplied by the Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah International Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development.*

New programme spotlights Qatar's startup founders

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

A new radio and multi-platform programme is giving Qatar's startup founders a space to share their entrepreneurial journeys, showcase their innovations, and speak candidly about the realities of building a business in the country.

The initiative is designed to close the gap between early-stage companies and the wider public, giving entrepreneurs access to one of Qatar's largest consumer audiences while reaching thousands of professionals and small business owners nationwide.

The programme, 'Yalla Startups', is the result of a partnership between Startup Grind Doha and Olive Suno Radio Network (OSRN), billed as "Qatar's first radio and multi-platform programme" dedicated exclusively to startups, entrepreneurship, and innovation, a Startup Grind Doha statement explained to *Gulf Times*.

The programme will air weekly on Radio Olive 106.3 FM and its integrated distribution platforms, including VoiceCast, OSRN's flagship OTT podcast distribution platform, with each episode featuring a different startup and bringing the stories, products, services, and innovations of Qatar's entrepreneurs to audiences across the country.

The programme will primarily feature business-to-consumer (B2C) startups with products and services designed for everyday consumers, alongside startups developing solutions to help small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) become more efficient, productive, and competitive.

By introducing these businesses to a wider audience, organisers said the programme will help startups build brand awareness, connect with potential customers, and accelerate the adoption of locally developed innovation.

Beyond showcasing startups, the programme is designed to educate, inspire, and encourage entrepreneurship by sharing real founder stories, practical business lessons, and the challenges and successes behind building a company, while highlighting the people, ideas, and innovations shaping Qatar's startup ecosystem.

Ameer Ali, founder and managing director of OSRN, said: "Qatar's startup community deserves more than a moment in the spotlight — it deserves visibility and engagement across every platform where its audience is active by creating awareness and educating audiences in their own languages.

"Through Yalla Startups, our partnership with Startup Grind Doha brings founders' stories to life in the formats that matter today: on-air, on-demand through our VoiceCast OTT platform, and across integrated digital channels, which aims to contribute to Qatar's growing startup ecosystem."

He added: "This is not a one-time feature; it is an ongoing commitment to amplifying the voices of the people building Qatar's future. We believe that when entrepreneurs are heard, ecosystems grow and communities thrive."

Indica Amarasinghe, chapter director of Startup Grind Doha, said: "Startups need more than funding — they need visibility, customers, and opportunities to tell their story. Yalla Startups creates a unique platform for founders to reach consumers and business owners across Qatar while showcasing the incredible innovation being built locally. Together with Olive Suno Radio Network, we hope to inspire more entrepreneurs and help startups connect with the audiences that matter most."

The launch represents another milestone for Startup Grind Doha in its mission to strengthen Qatar's startup ecosystem through community building, education, partnerships, and founder support. It also reinforces OSRN's commitment to delivering programming that informs, inspires, and creates value for its listeners.

From left: Ameer Ali, founder and managing director of OSRN, and Indica Amarasinghe, chapter director of Startup Grind Doha.

Strategic trust essential for Asia's future, says IBPC Qatar president

Some 200 leaders from 36 countries and territories gathered at the Horasis Asia Meeting 2026 to explore the future of Asia amid a rapidly evolving geopolitical, economic and technological landscape.

Among them was Thaha Muhammed Abdul Kareem, president of the Indian Business and Professionals Council (IBPC) Qatar under the aegis of the Embassy of India. Kareem, who is also chief strategic advisor to the chairman at Wathnan Holding, participated as a panelist in the session 'Building Asia's Shared Future: Cooperation in a Changing World.'

During the session, Kareem presented a strategic perspective on the future of regional cooperation, arguing that while Asia has successfully built deep economic interdependence over recent decades, the defining priority for the next decade must be the strengthening of strategic trust.

He said, "Asia has built economic interdependence. The next decade must build strategic trust."

Kareem observed that trade, investment, technology, and integrated supply chains have connected Asian economies more closely than at any other point in history. However, in an era marked by geopolitical uncertainty, geoeconomic fragmentation and rapid technological transformation, economic interdependence alone is no longer sufficient to sustain long-term prosperity, he said.

Instead, Kareem emphasised that durable growth will depend on trusted partnerships, resilient institutions, strategic dialogue, and a shared commitment to regional co-operation.

He also highlighted three strategic priorities for Asia's future: Transforming economic interdependence into enduring strategic partnerships, leveraging Asia's diversity as a strategic advantage rather than a source of division, and recognising trust as strategic infrastructure essential for investment, innovation and long-term regional stability.

Reflecting on Asia's diverse cultures, political systems, and economic models, he noted that the region's differences should not be viewed as barriers to cooperation but as a source of resilience and innovation.

"Asia does not need uniformity. It needs complementarity," he emphasised.

Drawing on his experience in the Gulf region, Kareem highlighted the Gulf's growing role as a strategic connector linking Asia, Africa, and Europe through investment, logistics, energy, innovation, and finance.

He noted that Asia's future will increasingly be shaped by multiple centres of cooperation working together to create shared value across borders. Kareem emphasised that while competition among nations is inevitable, it should never come at the expense of co-operation, trust and long-term regional stability.

IBPC Qatar president Thaha Muhammed Abdul Kareem (extreme left) participated as a panellist in the session 'Building Asia's Shared Future: Co-operation in a Changing World' during the Horasis Asia Meeting 2026 held recently.

Cyclical factors underpin US dollar resilience, says QNB

In recent years, the US dollar has faced mounting pressure from structural headwinds, including an overvalued real exchange rate, persistent fiscal and trade deficits, and the gradual diversification of international reserves by central banks.

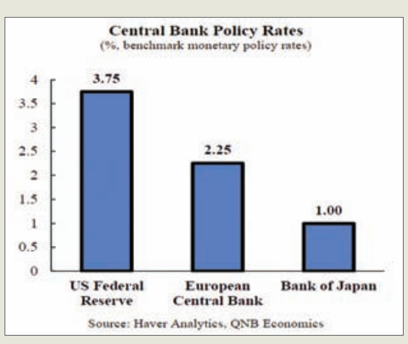
QNB's latest economic commentary noted that these factors have led many analysts to question the sustainability of the dollar's long-term strength. Despite this, the US dollar has remained resilient against most major currencies. This resilience reflects the continued strength of cyclical factors, which have helped offset longer-term structural pressures, QNB stated.

Although structural factors are likely to shape the US dollar's trajectory over the longer term, exchange rates are primarily driven by cyclical forces over shorter horizons. In particular, interest rate differentials have traditionally been the single most important cyclical driver of the currency, influencing global capital flows and portfolio allocation.

"More recently, the resilience of the US economy and the AI-driven investment boom have provided additional support to the currency by reinforcing foreign demand for US financial assets," stated QNB, noting three factors that continue to underpin the US dollar strength despite the headwinds.

QNB stated, "First, interest rate differentials continue to provide support for the US dollar. Exchange rates are strongly influenced by the relative return investors can earn on financial assets across countries, making monetary policy a key driver of currency movements.

"When US interest rates rise relative to those in other advanced economies, dollar-denominated assets become more attractive, increasing demand for the currency. Consequently, periods of higher US interest rates have historically been associated with a stronger US dollar."



Recent shifts in the US Federal Reserve's policy stance have reinforced the role of interest rate differentials in supporting the US dollar. At the beginning of the year, financial markets anticipate the Federal Reserve to reduce interest rates by around 50 basis points during 2026, stated QNB.

However, persistent inflationary pressures, resilient economic activity, and the Federal Reserve's shift towards a more hawkish stance under Chair Kevin Warsh have led to a significant reassessment of the policy outlook. Financial markets now expect policy rates to remain higher for longer and assign a meaningful probability to additional rate hikes, QNB stated.

As a result, US policy rates would remain well above those in other major advanced economies, with the Federal Funds target range at 3.50-3.75%, compared with the ECB's deposit facility rate at 2.25% and the Bank of Japan's policy rate at 1.00%.

These wide interest rate differentials are expected to remain an important source of strength for the US dollar, QNB noted.

"Second, AI and technology-driven stock market performance continues to reinforce foreign demand for US financial assets. The expanding adoption of AI has triggered a massive wave of investment in digital infrastructure, including semiconductors, data centres, cloud computing, and electricity networks.

"As the global leader in AI innovation, the US has attracted a disproportionate share of this investment, supporting strong corporate earnings, and continued equity market outperformance. These developments have enhanced the attractiveness of US financial assets, encouraging foreign capital inflows and providing an additional source of strength for the US dollar," stated QNB. QNB stated, "Third, US economic growth continues to outperform other advanced economies, reinforcing the US dollar. While growth has moderated from the exceptionally strong pace recorded in recent years, activity indicators continue to point to stronger economic momentum than in other major economies.

"In particular, the US composite PMI has remained comfortably above the 50-point expansion threshold, signaling growth in both services and manufacturing, while the Euro Area composite PMI has hovered close or below the stagnation threshold."

In addition to boosting demand for US financial assets, QNB stated that the AI investment boom is also benefiting the real economy through record capital expenditure. Over time, these investments are expected to support productivity growth and strengthen the US economy's long-term growth potential.

"All in all, while mounting structural headwinds continue to point to a gradual US dollar depreciation over the longer term, cyclical factors are set to remain the dominant drivers of the currency in the near term."