CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM | Page 8

Strong labour market underpins US economic resilience, says QNB

Sunday, August 9, 2026
Safar 26, 1448 AH
GULF TIMES
BUSINESS

FORMIDABLE TASK : Page 3

Air India bets on Ethiopian Airlines veteran Tewolde for tough reset

Qatar debt issuances offset regional lull: S&P

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

Increased debt issuances from Qatar helped offset contractions across wider regional markets during the first half of 2026, even as total sustainable bond volumes in the Middle East fell under geopolitical pressure.

According to the report 'Sustainability Insights: Middle East Sustainable Bond Outlook Midyear 2026: Market Momentum Despite Headwinds' published by S&P Global Ratings, sustainable bond values across the region dropped 24% year-on-year in the first six months to $7bn, down from $10bn in H1 2025.

The rating agency adjusted its full-year forecast for regional issuance to between $15bn and $20bn, down from a previous estimate of $20bn to $25bn. "That said, the decline was less pronounced than the over 40% drop in total bond issuance in the same period," stated the report, citing S&P Capital IQ data.

Sustainable instruments showed far greater resilience than the broader capital markets, where total regional bond issuance plunged by more than 40% over the same period. Strong early momentum saw $5bn issued in the first quarter, backed by $4bn brought to market during January alone, the report stated.

While the UAE and Saudi Arabia maintained their position as market leaders, accounting for roughly 98% of overall issuance by value, expanding output from Qatari issuers helped balance significant declines in other regional markets, including Turkiye.

The rating agency stated that regional financial institutions drove the vast majority of capital market activity, accounting for 80% of issued sustainable debt by value and 87% by volume. Heightened market uncertainty kept non-financial corporations on the sidelines, with corporate sustainable debt issuances falling by more than 80% as firms turned to direct bank loans and private placements to handle debt refinancing, it also stated.

According to the report, issuance picked up in the second quarter following an April ceasefire and a subsequent memorandum of understanding signed between the US and Iran in June, providing a brief window for regional issuers to bring $2bn in sustainable debt to market.

Borrowing costs remain elevated, however, as the US Federal Reserve is now expected to hold interest rates steady rather than deliver previously anticipated monetary easing, the report noted.

S&P Global Ratings maintained a positive medium-term outlook for Gulf sustainable debt, pointing to an estimated $50bn maturity wall between 2027 and 2030 that will require refinancing. The rating agency added that medium-term demand will be supported by national energy transition strategies, new bond structures, including transition and blue bonds, and ongoing demand for sustainable sukuk.

Increased debt issuances from Qatar helped offset contractions across wider regional markets during the first half of 2026, even as total sustainable bond volumes in the Middle East fell under geopolitical pressure, according to S&P Global Ratings. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

Peninsula Agritrade LLC becomes Dome Agribusiness LLC's main trading operations entity

PENINSULA AGRITRADE LLC

Peninsula becomes Qatar's first physically-operating global agribusiness and accelerates regional expansion.

Back in April 2026, you spoke about building a global agribusiness platform from Qatar. What has happened since then?

Sedat Andic: The defining milestone was the establishment of **Peninsula Agritrade LLC** in July 2026. Once Peninsula was formed, it became clear that this would be the centre of our operational activity. It gave us a focused structure and a clear identity for the next phase of our growth. We also began aligning our long-term strategy with Qatar's broader direction in food security and regional supply-chain development, which strengthened the foundation of the platform.

Why the name "Peninsula Agritrade LLC"?

Sedat Andic: We chose the name deliberately. From the beginning, we wanted Qatar to be our central base. Our long-term vision is to position ourselves as the first international agribusiness supply-chain platform headquartered in Qatar.

"Peninsula" reflects Qatar's geography and identity. It's simple, recognisable, and directly connected to the country we represent. The name signals our commitment to building a platform anchored in Qatar but connected to global agricultural flows.

And the logo — what does it represent?

Sedat Andic: The logo is built around Qatar. The maroon colour comes from the national flag, and the map of Qatar forms the outline, with a wheat grain shaped inside that map. It's a very intentional design. The wheat reflects our core commodities, and the Qatar map shows exactly where we are anchored. The message is clear: Peninsula is a Qatar-rooted trading platform, representing Qatar in every market we enter. It also reinforces our ambition to contribute to Qatar's long-term food-security ecosystem.

You said Qatar will be the operational centre. What does that mean in practice?

Sedat Andic: It means our day-to-day operations are moving to Doha. Contracting, logistics coordination, documentation, and regional execution will be run out of Qatar. We want the physical heartbeat of the company to be here, not just the legal registration. Operating from Doha also gives us proximity to decision-makers, infrastructure, and regional trade corridors, which strengthens our ability to scale.

Are you looking to work with public and private stakeholders in Qatar?

Sedat Andic: Absolutely. A project of this scale needs cooperation. We want to work with public institutions, private companies, logistics providers, financial entities, and food-security stakeholders. Our aim is to build a platform that supports Qatar's long-term economic and supply-chain vision. Peninsula is designed to be a bridge between global agricultural markets and Qatar's strategic ambitions.

> By end of July 2026, we reached 250,000 MTS trading volume — a clear sign of operational momentum.
>
> Sedat Andic
> Founder & Managing Director

Do you believe this project requires national-level support?

Sedat Andic: Yes, because this is a visionary project for Qatar. And we are also very clear about one thing: we are the first and only agribusiness company that came to Qatar specifically to build an international supply-chain platform from here.

No one else has attempted this.

National-level support is important because this initiative aligns with Qatar's food-security strategy, logistics development, and regional positioning. With the right backing, Qatar can become a recognised hub for agricultural supply chains, and Peninsula can be one of the platforms driving that transformation.

How would you describe your current commercial footprint?

Sedat Andic: Our strongest commercial corridor today is Türkiye. It has been the backbone of our trading flows — strong demand, reliable counterparties, and a broad commodity mix. Peninsula's structure made our Turkish operations faster and more efficient. Türkiye remains a strategic market and will continue to play a major role as we expand into the GCC.

What is your next strategic focus?

Sedat Andic: The Middle East. We want to replicate the same reliability and presence in the GCC that we already have in Türkiye. Qatar, UAE, Oman, and Saudi Arabia are the markets we are preparing to enter more actively. The region's demand profile and logistics infrastructure make it a natural extension of our commercial footprint.

What commodities will drive your expansion?

Sedat Andic: Grains, oilseeds, meals, pulses, rice, sugar, coffee, and feed co-products. GCC demand is rising, especially for rice, sugar, pulses, and feed ingredients. Our commodity book is diversified, and Peninsula's structure allows us to scale each category efficiently.

What are your short- and medium-term priorities?

Sedat Andic: In the short term, our focus is operational. We are opening origination offices in Russia, Ukraine, and Romania; increasing monthly volumes to around 80,000–100,000 MT; expanding container flows into the GCC and East Africa; and completing Peninsula's operational setup in Doha.

Over the medium term, we aim to reach 600,000–750,000 MT in cumulative volume, begin silo and warehousing feasibility work in Qatar, expand procurement partnerships in Kazakhstan and Moldova, and advance AI-based trade-cycle automation.

By mid-2027, our target is 1.25–1.5 million MT in annual volume, supported by new hubs in Singapore, Dubai, and São Paulo.

A final message for partners and stakeholders in the region?

Sedat Andic: We are building a platform anchored in Qatar and designed for regional impact. Peninsula represents a long-term commitment to reliability, transparency, and scale. We welcome cooperation with organisations that share this ambition and want to be part of a new, Qatar-based supply-chain ecosystem.

BUSINESS

Kurdistan-focused Genel Energy rejects takeover bid from Norway's DNO

Reuters
London

Kurdistan-focused Genel Energy has rejected Norwegian oil firm DNO's £202mn ($271.8mn) takeover bid, it said on Friday, as it fundamentally undervalued the London-listed company.

Dealmaking among oil companies operating in the Middle East is gathering pace as a surge in oil prices since the onset of the Iran war in February has enabled some energy firms focused on the region to pursue mergers and acquisitions.

A string of London-listed companies have been bought out in recent years as the FTSE 100 share index has traded at a discount to its global counterparts, particularly in the US

"London-listed producers have traded below the value of their underlying assets for years, so acquirers can buy established, cash-generative production more cheaply than they could develop it themselves," said Aaron Bright, investment analyst at IG.

DNO, operator of the Tawke field in Iraq's Kurdistan region in which Genel holds a quarter interest, made its bid on July 28 at a premium of 35% to Genel's close the previous day.

Oil firms operating in the Kurdish region have been struggling with multiple production and export suspensions due to geopolitical tensions in the region, prompting them to look at diversifying their footprint.

Dealmaking among oil companies operating in the Middle East is gathering pace as a surge in oil prices since the onset of the Iran war in February has enabled some energy firms focused on the region to pursue mergers and acquisitions

Genel in July had agreed in principle to buy Egypt-focused Capricorn Energy in a $360mn all-cash deal, though other suitors are circling Capricorn.

"(DNO's proposal) provides certainty of value irrespective of the outcome of Genel's offer for Capricorn," the Norwegian group said in a statement disclosing its bid, which it said was not conditional on the outcome of Genel's Capricorn pursuit.

'Adnoc hires Morgan Stanley's O'Dwyer as CIO'

Abu Dhabi state energy firm Adnoc has hired Morgan Stanley's global co-head of energy Michael O'Dwyer as chief investment officer as it pursues expansion at home and abroad, three sources familiar with the move said on Thursday, reports Reuters.
Adnoc did not respond to a request for comment. Morgan Stanley and O'Dwyer declined to comment.
Adnoc is accelerating expansion through its XRG investment arm and is chasing acquisitions in gas, chemicals and shipping to grow production, refining and trading following the UAE's exit from Opec. O'Dwyer has worked for Morgan Stanley since 2008, joining from Lehman Brothers.
Morgan Stanley has been involved in some of the largest energy deals in recent years, including ExxonMobil's $65bn acquisition of Pioneer Natural Resources in 2023 and Chevron's $53bn acquisition of Hess in 2025.
It also served as a lead global coordinator and underwriter for Saudi Aramco's initial public offering.

India's Reliance is chartering supertanker at a record freight price to lift Iraqi crude

Reuters
New Delhi/London

India's Reliance Industries has paid a record $23mn to $25mn to charter a supertanker to lift Iraqi crude, pointing to a limited pool of ships available in the Gulf and the soaring costs of every voyage, three shipping sources said.

Shipping traffic via the Strait of Hormuz, through which Iraq's seaborne oil must pass, is still well below the average of 125 to 140 vessels a day seen before the Iran war began at the end of February, putting further strain on buyers seeking to get cargoes out.

Reliance, the operator of the world's biggest refining complex in India's western state of Gujarat, booked the tanker to load 2mn barrels of oil at 1200 World Scale — a measure of freight costs — which was 12 times the benchmark freight rate, to lift Iraqi crude, the sources said.

That translated into a total cost of $23mn to $25mn for the charter hire — among the highest prices paid during the conflict, according to calculations by ship brokers.

Before the war, freight costs were 0.8 to 0.9 times the benchmark, working out at about $2mn.

Despite paying the record freight rate, Reliance is still expected to save millions of dollars on the cargo because of steep discounts offered by Iraq's state oil marketer SOMO, the sources said.

The vessel will be supplied by South Korea's Sinokor, one of the few shipowners continuing to send tankers through the Strait of Hormuz as attacks on commercial vessels have increased the risks of navigating the waterway.

Reliance and Sinokor did not respond to emailed requests for comment.

Iraq is offering its crude at a discount of about $25 to $30 per barrel to Dubai benchmarks to entice buyers to lift cargoes from terminals inside the Strait of Hormuz, a document seen by Reuters this week showed. Several Indian and Chinese refiners have sought vessels this week to enter the Strait and load crude at Iraq's Basrah Oil Terminal, attracted by the steep discounts, other shipping sources said.

However, no vessels have been fixed so far as shipowners are wary of entering the waterway, they said.

Flames emerge from flare stacks at Nahr Bin Umar oil field, north of Basra. Iraq is offering its crude at a discount of about $25 to $30 per barrel to Dubai benchmarks to entice buyers to lift cargoes from terminals inside the Strait of Hormuz, a document seen by Reuters this week showed.

Apple says Mac users in China can connect to Alibaba's Qwen AI service

Reuters
Beijing

Apple has published a guide explaining how eligible Mac users in mainland China can connect Alibaba's Qwen artificial-intelligence service to the US tech giant's Siri digital assistant and Writing Tools feature.
The Mac-specific arrangement could help Apple compete in China's AI PC market, where it has been losing market share as domestic manufacturers such as Lenovo have promoted locally developed AI features.
Qwen is Chinese ecommerce giant Alibaba's family of generative-AI models, which can create text and images and analyse documents, photos and other material in response to user prompts.
Apple's updated Chinese-language guide says users who opt in can use Qwen through Siri for more detailed responses to some requests, including analysis of photos and documents. Writing Tools can also draw on the service to create text or images from a description.
The extension is intended for Macs running macOS 26.6 or later, subject to China-specific conditions. Users must activate the extension and sign in to a Qwen account.
Alibaba cannot use those materials to train or improve its models, according to the guide.
Mac shipments in mainland China fell 9% in the first quarter year on year to about 800,000 units, leaving it with 9% of the PC market, versus Lenovo's 31% and fast-growing Huawei's 16%, according to Omdia.
Lenovo has made its Tianxi personal AI agent central to its AI-PC strategy, while Huawei is building AI functions across its HarmonyOS ecosystem.
Linking Qwen to Siri and Writing Tools gives Apple a locally compliant route to offer more capable document, image and content-creation functions while retaining control of the Mac interface.
For Alibaba, integration with Apple's built-in software could broaden Qwen's reach beyond its own applications and cloud services.

Gas crisis makes Bangladesh textiles sector rethink sources of energy

Reuters
Dhaka

Bangladesh's vital textile sector was already suffering high energy costs from the Middle East war when a fire at one of its two gas import terminals last month further exposed its energy insecurity and forced industry leaders to look to other fuels.
The textile industry employs some 4mn people out of a total industrial workforce of about 14mn and produces around 80% of Bangladesh's exports and about 13% of its GDP.
But the industry is heavily reliant on gas for its wet processing operations such as washing, dyeing and finishing clothes.
Bangladesh has a longstanding gas supply shortfall due to local production falling and import costs rising.
A fire at one of Bangladesh's two LNG terminals last month then cut supply to just over a half of demand, according to data from state-owned oil and gas company Petrobangla.
Mohd Khorshed Alam, a director of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), said a large number of factories in the industrial belts of Savar, Ashulia and Narayanganj were now operating at up to 40% below capacity.
Some factories have turned to more costly compressed natural gas from roadside filling stations that normally fuel cars, or to even more expensive diesel to fulfil urgent orders.
"The country cannot build future industrial investment on uncertain LNG supplies and repeated supply disruptions. We need energy security, not piecemeal firefighting," said Fazlul Hoque, managing director of Plummy Fashions, one of the country's leading textile producers.

The textile industry employs some 4mn people out of a total industrial workforce of about 14mn and produces around 80% of Bangladesh's exports and about 13% of its GDP

Hoque's factory in Narayanganj employs more 1,000 people and has faced disruptions to its energy supply for years. As a result, he is considering switching to electrification and alternative fuels such as biomass.
Almost all rural households in Bangladesh use biomass for cooking, burning pellets made of agricultural residues like rice husk, rice straw, jute sticks, bagasse and wheat straw, as well as wood residues and municipal waste.
A few textile factories have already begun burning biomass to fuel their boilers.
But the textile sector has an exceptionally large fuel demand relative to the country's biomass base, and would compete with rural households, said Dr Laxmikant Jawale, regional lead for South Asia and Southeast Asia at the Apparel Impact Institute, a non-profit focused on decarbonising the apparel supply chain.
Bangladesh's logistics and infrastructure for aggregating biomass at an industrial scale is still underdeveloped, while switching to biomass requires investment in boiler retrofitting and changing the way fuel is handled, stored, combusted, and how ash is removed, he said.
"Biomass thus cannot be a sector-wide strategy, rather it works better as a facility-by-facility, case-by-case option," Jawale said.
Other solutions include installing electric boilers and heat pumps that could cut energy use by up to 45%.
But the Apparel Impact Institute said in a report last year that installing heat pumps would require large-scale capital investment and that grid-connected electric boilers could not alone make up the energy deficit if supply were not consistent.
"Urgently improving grid access and reliability for factories across the country will send a clear market signal that grid electricity — and preferably renewable electricity — is what the industry needs," said Jawale.

LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

Challenges for arbitrators in settlement of disputes

By Dr AbdelGadir Warsama Ghalib

“Arbitration is the will of the parties”, a very important slogan that shows the relation between arbitration and the free choice of the parties to freely opt for arbitration for the settlement of their dispute(s).

This is clearly shown in the right of the parties to appoint the arbitrators or, on the contrary, to challenge their appointment due to certain instances that could affect the performance of the arbitratorarbitration process. The good known management principle of “hire and fire” applies here.

With reference to the appointment of the parties to the arbitrators, the UNICITRAL model law on international commercial arbitration provides for all necessary details regarding the appointment of the arbitrators, taking in consideration that this is a very sensitive and delicate technical step that boosts steady and fast successful arbitration.

Likewise, the rules also specifically refer to the grounds of the instances regarding the “challenge for arbitrators”. In this connection, when a person is approached in connection with his/her possible appointment as an arbitrator, heshe shall disclose any circumstances that are likely to give rise to justifiable doubts as to his/her impartiality or independence.

Impartiality and independence of the arbitrators are presumed as the main pillars in the arbitration profession. Any arbitrator, from the time of hisher appointment and throughout the arbitral proceedings, shall without any delay disclose any such circumstances related to impartiality and independence to the parties, unless they have already been informed of such instances by him.

An arbitrator shall always be free from any pressures or influence from the parties, as long as heshe is doing the role in honesty within the required professional and ethical standards. However, an arbitrator may be challenged only if circumstances exist to give rise to justifiable doubts as to hisher impartiality or independence, or if heshe does not possess the qualifications agreed to by the parties.

A party may challenge an arbitrator appointed by him, or in whose appointment heshe has participated, only for reasons of which heshe becomes aware after the appointment has been made. By all means, this authority by any party shall be exercised very carefully and far away from personal differences or grudges.

Regarding the challenge procedure, the parties are free to agree on a procedure for challenging an arbitrator, subject to and according to certain provisions as provided for in the rules. Failing such agreement, a party who intends to challenge an arbitrator shall, within fifteen days after becoming aware of the constitution of the tribunal or after becoming aware of any other circumstances, send a written statement of the reasons for the challenge to the arbitral tribunal. Unless the challenged arbitrator withdraws from his office or the other party agrees to the challenge, the arbitral tribunal shall decide on the challenge.

If a challenge under any procedure agreed upon by the parties or under the mentioned procedures in the rules, is not successful, the challenging party may request within thirty days after having received notice of the decision rejecting the challenge, the court or other authority specified in the rules, to decide on the challenge, which decision shall be subject to no appeal. While such a request is pending, the arbitral tribunal, including the challenged arbitrator, may continue the arbitral proceedings and make an award.

No doubt, certain facts may emerge that make the challenge very necessary. Therefore, the rules cover such challenge and how to go within. This could be very essential to achieve justice and equity and to keep the arbitration profession clean form those who may be working to achieve personal gains at the cost of justice.

■ *Dr AbdelGadir Warsama Ghalib is a corporate legal counsel.*
Email: **awarsama@warsamalc.com**

Air India bets on Ethiopian Airlines veteran Tewolde for its tough reset

Reuters
New Delhi

Seven years before he was named to lead Air India, Tewolde Gebremariam stood at the scene of an Ethiopian Airlines crash that killed 157 people and helped trigger the worldwide grounding of Boeing 737 MAX jets.

That disaster and the Covid-19 pandemic that followed became two of the gravest crises he faced. It may help explain why the Tata Group turned to him to run Air India.

The job that Tewolde faces at the Indian airline is formidable: he must restore confidence in its safety after a crash last year killed 260 people, stem losses, modernize an ageing fleet and navigate Pakistan's ban on Indian carriers using its airspace.

The surprise appointment of outsider Tewolde signals a shift in Tata Group's turnaround of the airline, from merging with Indian carrier Vistara and placing large aircraft orders, to the harder task of running it safely, reliably and profitably.

Tata owns about 75% of Air India, with Singapore Airlines owning the rest.

Reuters reported in May that the search had narrowed to two candidates — Air India commercial chief Nipun Aggarwal and Vinod Kannan, former CEO of Vistara, now at Singapore Airlines — although no decision had been made.

Air India and Ethiopian Airlines did not respond to emails seeking comment, and Tewolde did not respond to a message sent on LinkedIn.

An internal Air India document reviewed by Reuters describes Tewolde as a “change leader” with special skills in crisis management, who joined Ethiopian in 1985 in the cargo unit and rose to run Africa's largest airline group. He was named African CEO of the Year in 2012.

Ethiopian Airlines Chief Executive Officer Tewolde Gebremariam speaks at the Africa CEO Forum in Kigali, Rwanda in March, 2019.

In 11 years as CEO of Ethiopian Airlines, the Air India document says, he turned it into Africa's leading carrier, spending $1bn to build businesses around its Addis Ababa hub, including the continent's largest cargo terminal, an aviation university, maintenance hangars, a catering centre and a 1,000-room hotel.

Tewolde will be replacing Campbell Wilson, who resigned in April and whose notice period ends on September 30. Air India has not said when Tewolde will formally take charge.

The gravest crisis Tewolde handled came on March 10, 2019, when Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 went down shortly after takeoff from Addis Ababa. Tewolde grounded the carrier's remaining 737 MAX jets the same day, ahead of orders by regulators in China and the US.

About a year later, the Covid pandemic wiped out most of Ethiopian's passenger business. Without a state bailout, Tewolde turned to cargo, leaning on freighters and a cargo terminal built years earlier and converting passenger jets to carry freight.

The internal document lists managing in a “hyper competitive environment” as one of Tewolde's skills — a test that awaits him in India, where IndiGo carries the bulk of domestic traffic and foreign carriers compete hard for lucrative international routes.

Also, the June 2025 crash of an Air India Boeing 787 Dreamliner has intensified regulatory scrutiny of the carrier, which has since faced warnings and a penalty over separate safety and compliance lapses.

Tewolde is no stranger to India, having run Ethiopian's India and Southeast Asia business from Mumbai in the mid-1990s.

He left the airline in March 2022 due to health issues. Since then he has advised US carrier Delta Air Lines on international business and the World Bank's International Finance Corp on aviation and logistics investment in emerging markets, the internal document says.

At Air India, Tewolde inherits a larger, more complex company. The airline and its budget arm lost over $2bn last financial year. The carrier has cut international flights as Pakistan's airspace ban and the Iran war have lengthened routes and raised fuel costs.

The airline is also awaiting a final report into last year's crash. Last month, Air India Chairman N Chandrasekaran said the airline's turnaround could take up to a decade.

Air India's other safety lapses include one of its Airbus jets completing eight passenger flights without a mandatory airworthiness permit. The airline's own investigation found “systemic failures” and an urgent need to tighten compliance, Reuters reported in December.

Tewolde has said Ethiopian thrived as a state-owned airline because successive governments let professionals run it. “The owners should not be managers,” he said in a 2023 interview on the “Our Future Skies” podcast.

World Bank offers $750mn guarantee for Indonesia loans programme

AFP
Washington

The World Bank has announced that it was providing $750mn in financial guarantees to Indonesia's largest state-owned commercial bank, with the funds to be channeled into the government's low-interest loan program for small businesses.

The loan will be provided in two tranches by financial giant HSBC to Indonesia's Bank Mandiri over a three-year term, and is backed by the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), an arm of the World Bank Group.

“This transaction marks a significant milestone for Bank Mandiri and underscores the confidence of the international financial community in Indonesia's economic fundamentals and the strength of our institution,” said Ari Rizaldi, director of treasury and international banking at Bank Mandiri.

The funds will be used for Indonesia's Kredit Usaha Rakyat (KUR, or “People's Business Credit”) program, which provides loans to the micro, small and medium-scale (MSME) businesses that account for roughly 60% of the country's $1.45tn GDP, employing the vast majority of the country's labor force.

In a statement, the World Bank said proceeds from the loan would be used to help finance and refinance loans to retail and service sector businesses, street vendors, farmers and fishermen.

According to Indonesian finance ministry data, the KUR program has reached 2.65mn people and businesses, and disbursed 169tn Indonesian rupiah ($9.4bn) in funds as of July 22 this year.

“Women entrepreneurs are at the heart of this opportunity,” said the World Bank statement. “They own or manage an estimated 65% of Indonesia's MSMEs, making greater access to formal credit a powerful lever for broad-based prosperity.”

The multilateral lender said Bank Mandiri had committed to a Gender Action Plan to expand lending to women-owned businesses.

Brazil cuts benchmark rate for 4th consecutive time

Brazil's central bank has cut its benchmark interest rate for the fourth time straight, two months before presidential elections when incumbent Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva seeks another term, reports AFP.

The so-called Selic rate, one of the highest in the world, was lowered from 14.25% to 14%, the bank's Monetary Policy Committee, Copom, stated on Wednesday.

Markets had widely expected the cut, which is part of a cycle that began in March after almost two years of high interest rates.

Leftist Lula, who is seeking a non-consecutive fourth term in the upcoming elections, advocated for lower rates to stimulate South America's largest economy.

The central bank has exercised caution however, given the US-Israel war against Iran, which has pushed up oil prices and fueled inflation fears globally.

As for domestic affairs, the bank noted that despite easing inflation, it "still remains above the upper limit of the target."

The cost of living features among Brazilian voters' main concerns. Year-on-year inflation slowed to 4.64% in June, driven by falling food and fuel prices.

Exports worth $7.4bn affected by US tariffs: Singapore

People look on next to the CMA CGM Jacques Saade, the world's largest container ship to be fully-powered by liquefied natural gas (LNG), is seen docked at the CMA CGM-PSA Lion Terminal in Singapore (file). About one-third of Singapore's exports to the US, worth S$9.5bn ($7.4bn), will be affected by a new US tariff of 12.5% imposed on July 24, Trade Minister Gan Kim Yong has said, reports Reuters. Gan said in parliament on Wednesday that the tariffs imposed under Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974 would affect about a third of Singapore's exports, including optical instruments and chemical products. Exempt exports include energy and energy products, certain electronics and aerospace products, as well as semiconductors and pharmaceuticals. Gan said the US had said it levied the tariff because Singapore does not have a law prohibiting the importation of goods produced with forced labour, nor an Agreement of Reciprocal Trade with the US committing to introduce such a law. “Importantly, none of the 60 economies, including those that already have such prohibitions in force, received a full exemption from the tariff,” he said, referring to trading partners that have also had a similar tariff imposed, including the European Union and China. Singapore has said that there is no evidence that it is involved in the trade of goods involving forced labour. Gan said that the city-state would need to “consider carefully” what would be involved in an agreement with the US, noting that they may involve “commitments beyond an import prohibition, including export controls or restrictions relating to third countries”. As a major trading hub, he said the nation's goods and services trade amounts to around S$2.5tn each year, of which S$1.4tn was in goods so any import prohibition would have “significant implications”. According to the USTR's statistics, the US trade surplus with Singapore was $3.6bn in 2025.

BUSINESS

Amazon behind massive private gas plant for new data centres

AFP
Washington

Amazon confirmed on Friday it is financing a massive, private gas power plant in Texas that could become the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States.
It is the latest example of tech giants going off the grid to get their AI operations online faster.
The news was first reported by market intelligence company Cleanview, which reviewed satellite imagery to connect three data center construction permits filed this week by Amazon to the gas plant, which is being developed by Pacifico Energy and is known as GW Ranch. Previously filed permits for the plant show it would have 35 turbines and generate 7.65 gigawatts -- larger than any gas plant currently operating in the United States.
A bigger facility, at 9.2 gigawatts, is planned in Ohio under a public-private partnership involving SoftBank.
That plant would connect to the grid as well as power a data center.
The Pecos County, Texas, plant would be permitted to emit more than 30mn metric tonnes of greenhouse gases a year -- more than any other single source in the country, though facilities rarely emit at their permitted ceiling.
Amazon said that by generating its own power, it would avoid passing the cost on to ordinary Americans, whose electricity bills have spiked as utilities charge consumers for the new infrastructure feeding the AI boom.
"Amazon believes in paying the full costs of powering our operations," a spokesperson said. "Our new planned data center campus in Pecos County does just that: It's powered by new on-site generation that won't raise electricity costs for Texas families and designed to transition to grid-connected service as interconnection timelines allow."
The company added it was "exploring opportunities" for solar energy and battery storage on site, and it would make use of "non-potable, brackish groundwater" which it said would avoid putting pressure on the watershed.
Amazon added it remained committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2040 under The Climate Pledge, and had enabled 40 carbon-free energy projects totaling nearly 10 gigawatts in Texas.
Building so-called "behind-the-meter" power was once a niche practice, exemplified by Elon Musk's xAI deploying mobile gas turbines to its data center in Memphis in 2024.
xAI still accounts for most of the two gigawatts of behind-the-meter power online today, according to research by Cleanview, which estimates that around 97 gigawatts of such projects are planned involving every hyperscaler -- including Meta, Microsoft and Oracle, with enormous climate implications.
The precise figure depends on how many are built, how efficient the turbines are and how often they run, but the total emissions could easily top 200mn tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year, roughly equivalent to the annual emissions of more than 45mn cars, or about the entire carbon output of Pakistan.
"There are more efficient ways to use gas," John Rogers, an energy analyst for the Union of Concerned Scientists, told AFP. "Virtually none of these plants are proposing to use those, and that matters for on-site pollution, both direct and climate."
While less polluting than coal, gas plants are still significant sources of planet-warming emissions, and their operations, particularly upstream, also leak methane, the main component of natural gas and itself a powerful greenhouse gas.
Beyond their carbon footprints, they emit fine particulate matter, linked to a range of heart and lung problems; nitrogen oxides, which aggravate respiratory disease; and hazardous air pollutants including mercury, formaldehyde and benzene.

Trump renews attacks on Fed, targeting Cook for dismissal

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump is renewing his effort to fire Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook, keeping alive his assault on the central bank's independence even after the US Supreme Court in June refused to let the president fire her, according to a letter seen by Reuters.
The White House told Cook in a letter this week that the president was "considering" removing her from her role and demanded she respond to unproven mortgage fraud allegations within three weeks - allegations her attorney called "baseless."
The salvo against Cook is the second time this week Trump has restarted an effort to take actions that the Supreme Court blocked earlier this year. Trump earlier this week also issued another order attempting to limit birthright citizenship after the high court ruled against his previous effort to limit who is automatically considered a US citizen.
The letter to Cook, signed by Deputy Chief of Staff Dan Scavino and first reported by ABC News, alleged that she committed crimes that could be punishable by up to 30 years in prison and that her conduct constituted negligence that called into question her trustworthiness as a Fed governor, ABC reported.
In a statement, Cook's lawyer said "there is no valid cause" for removing Cook from her position.
"As we did before, we will challenge this latest pretext and preserve her position and the historic role of the Fed," attorney Abbe D Lowell said. The Federal Reserve had no comment. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.
Trump last year cited mortgage fraud in trying to fire Cook. She denied the allegations, calling them a pretext to remove her for monetary policy differences. The US Supreme Court refused in June to allow the firing, standing firm to preserve the central bank's cherished independence against the Republican president's unprecedented challenge.


Federal Reserve governor Lisa Cook.

Trump repeatedly threatened to fire former Fed Chair Jerome Powell for refusing to bow to the president's demands that he lower interest rates. His handpicked successor to Powell, Kevin Warsh, took the reins in May.
Since then, Trump has redirected his criticisms at other members of the Fed board, a majority of whom were appointed by Trump's predecessor, Democrat Joe Biden, while saying he will not be criticising Warsh, who has not as yet delivered Trump's wished-for rate cuts.
The Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling blocked Trump from removing Cook for now, providing a safeguard for the Fed specifically.
No other president since the central bank's founding in 1913 had sought to oust a Fed governor.
Conservative Chief Justice John Roberts, who authored the high court ruling, said Trump had "failed to afford Cook the procedural protections to which she was entitled by statute. Without such protections, she could not properly dispute the charges the president laid against her."
Roberts and fellow conservative Justice Brett Kavanaugh joined the court's three liberal justices in the ruling.
Conservative Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barrett dissented.
While the ruling definitively protects Fed officials from being fired at will by a president, the court said its ruling was not deciding the validity of the factual dispute in the case. It has since returned the case to lower courts.
"It at least remains an open question what precisely happened here, and indeed whether Cook committed 'gross negligence,' let alone 'deceitful and potentially criminal conduct,' as the president's letter alleges," Roberts wrote, adding that Cook must be able to respond to the charges made against her.
The Scavino letter to Cook resurfaces unproven allegations of mortgage fraud made last year by Federal Housing Finance Agency Director William Pulte.
In what is called a criminal referral, Pulte asked the Justice Department last year to open a criminal investigation into Cook and others over alleged mortgage fraud. There has been no indication of any such criminal investigation moving forward, and a Reuters report last year showed Cook in submissions to the lender for one of the homes at issue had listed it as a vacation property.
Reuters subsequently reported the local tax authority in Michigan said Cook had not broken rules for tax breaks on a home there that Cook declared her primary residence.
US District Judge Jia Cobb in September ruled that Trump's attempt to remove Cook without notice or a hearing likely violated her right to due process under the US Constitution's Fifth Amendment.
Cobb also said the allegations made against Cook likely were not a legally sufficient cause to remove her under the Federal Reserve Act as they relate to conduct that occurred before she served in the post.
Roberts, in his ruling, did not agree with that standard for cause but said nonetheless the standard to meet for dismissal of a Fed governor would need to be a "substantial threshold."
"Without such constraints in place, any perceived or alleged misstep (past or present) could provide a ready pretext for a governor's removal - a fact that he would surely know, and that would surely weigh on him as he decided what to say and how to vote," Roberts wrote. "Nothing could be more corrosive of the independence that Congress sought to preserve."

Coulson Aviation Canada buys 10 former RCAF Hercules aircraft

AFP
London

Coulson Aviation Canada, the Canadian division of Coulson Aviation, has acquired 10 former Royal Canadian Air Force CC-130H Hercules aircraft from the Government of Canada, according to a press release from Business Wire.
The acquisition doubles Coulson's global C-130H fleet from 10 aircraft to 20 and gives its Canadian division the scale to build the world's largest and most capable C-130 airtanker fleet.
The programme will be led by Coulson Aviation Canada and its engineering, manufacturing, maintenance and operational teams in British Columbia.
"These aircraft served Canada for decades and we would like to recognize the men and women of the RCAF that operated these aircraft with exceptional professionalism throughout their service," said Wayne Coulson, CEO of Coulson Aviation Canada. For many years, the CC-130H served Canada in tactical airlift, search and rescue, Arctic operations, disaster response, humanitarian missions and international deployments.
Canada is experiencing longer and more complex wildfire seasons, with larger and more intense fires placing greater demands on firefighters and response agencies. That changing environment requires aircraft that can reach fires quickly, deliver large and controlled retardant lines, and sustain operations throughout increasingly demanding fire seasons.
The acquisition builds on Coulson's existing C-130H program and its experience modifying, certifying, operating and supporting the aircraft as an airtanker.
Coulson's operational C-130H airtankers are equipped with the company's proprietary RADS-XXL retardant delivery system. Each aircraft can carry up to 4,000 US gallons, or more than 15,000 litres, of water or fire retardant.
The RADS-XXL system gives flight crews precise control over the amount and coverage level of each drop. Its high flow rate, combined with the C-130's payload, speed, range and ability to operate from shorter runways, makes the aircraft well suited to both rapid initial attack and sustained wildfire response.
"Firefighters on the ground need aircraft overhead that can get there quickly, carry a meaningful load and keep working," said Coulson. "These aircraft will multiply the current initial attack capacity operating in Canada today."
Coulson Aviation Canada supports the complete C-130 airtanker program, including engineering, certification, manufacturing, aircraft modification, maintenance, training and flight operations.
The acquisition is expected to expand skilled work in Canada across aircraft engineering, manufacturing, maintenance, flight operations and technical training.

Japanese yen surges as weak US jobs data drags down dollar

Reuters
New York

The dollar fell against major currencies including the yen and euro on Friday after data showed US employment unexpectedly declined in July, raising concerns about the economy and how the Federal Reserve may respond with interest rates.
The US economy lost 23,000 jobs in July, Labor Department data showed, compared with economists' expectations for an increase of 80,000 jobs in a Reuters poll. Data also showed that the US unemployment rate fell to 4.1% last month, pushing the labour participation rate to a near 5-1/2-year low of 61.4%.
The dollar weakened against the yen after the report, shedding gains made in recent days in the aftermath of a historic intervention last week between Japanese and US authorities, which had pushed it to a 13-week low. It was last down 0.52% to 157.62 yen.
"The big drop that we saw this morning is almost wholly related to the US employment report for July because I think no one really expected non-farm payrolls to be negative or that there would be a big downward revision in the June numbers," said Thierry Wizman, global FX and rates strategist at Macquarie Group.
"I'm inclined to think that the market has shifted the Fed hike into October or December instead of September. That's the main reason for the dollar's decline. The market thinks that the Federal Reserve is going to take into account how tight the labour market is.
So anytime you see a print that suggests the US economy is weak or that the labor market is not as strong as otherwise thought, they effectively push out the prospect of a Fed rate hike."
US Treasury yields fell sharply following the report. The 2-year note yield, which typically moves in step with Fed rate expectations, fell 5.19 basis points to 4.193%. The yield on benchmark US 10-year notes fell 2.67 basis points to 4.643%. Markets are now pricing in a nearly 56% chance that the Fed will hold rates in September, up from 45% a day earlier, according to the CME's FedWatch tool.
The euro was last up 0.31% against the dollar at $1.1559.
The dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of currencies including the yen and the euro, fell 0.46% to 99.49.
Gold rose as the US dollar fell. Spot gold rose 2.28% to $4,336.09 an ounce.

The Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) rose 191.56 points or 1.9% to 10,112.25 vs. the previous week. Market capitalisation increased by 2.4% to QR608.2bn from QR594.2bn at the end of the previous trading week. Of the 54 companies traded, 39 ended higher, two unchanged, while 13 ended lower. Qatar General Insurance (QGRI) was the best performing stock for the week, climbing 24.3%. Meanwhile, Nebras (QEWS) was the worst performing stock for the week, decreasing 3.9%.

Traded value during the week rose 8.6% to QR1,698.0mn vs QR1,563.1mn in the prior trading week. QNBK was the top value stock traded during the week with total traded value of QR161.8mn.

Traded volume increased 3.6% to 678.2mn shares compared with 654.8mn shares in the prior trading week. The number of transactions fell 1.8% to 124,383 vs 126,679 in the prior week. Qatar Aluminum (QAMC) was the top volume stock traded during the week with total traded volume of 70.5mn shares.

Foreign institutions turned bullish, ending the week with net buying of QR98.3mn vs net selling of QR86.6mn in the prior week.

Qatari institutions turned bearish with net selling of QR42.2mn vs net buying of QR40.0mn in the week before. Foreign retail investors ended the week with net selling of QR5.4mn vs net buying of QR13.1mn in the prior week. Qatari retail investors ended the week with net selling of QR50.7mn vs net buying of QR33.5mn. Global foreign institutions remained net sellers of Qatari equities by $84.0mn YTD, while GCC institutions remained net sellers by $13.7mn.

DISCLAIMER

This report expresses the views and opinions of QNB Financial Services Co WLL ("QNBFS") at a given time only. It is not an offer, promotion or recommendation to buy or sell securities or other investments, nor is it intended to constitute legal, tax, accounting, or financial advice. We therefore strongly advise potential investors to seek independent professional advice before making any investment decision. Although the information in this report has been obtained from sources that QNBFS believes to be reliable, we have not independently verified such information and it may not be accurate or complete. *Gulf Times* and QNBFS hereby disclaim any responsibility or any direct or indirect claim resulting from using this report.

QNB FINANCIAL SERVICES

Weekly Market Report

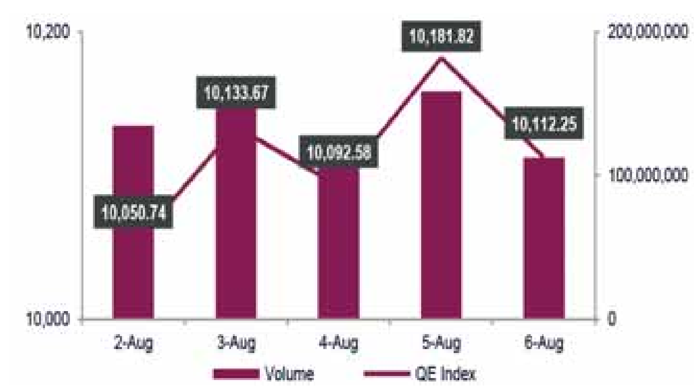
Market Indicators	Week ended. August 06, 2026	Week ended. July 30, 2026	Chg. %
Value Traded (QR mn)	1,698.0	1,563.1	8.6
Exch. Market Cap. (QR mn)	608,244.3	594,182.2	2.4
Volume (mn)	678.2	654.8	3.6
Number of Transactions	124,383	126,679	(1.8)
Companies Traded	54	54	0.0
Market Breadth	39:13	15:38	–

Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Market Indices	Close	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%
Total Return	24,988.64	1.9	1.9	(2.9)
ALL Share Index	3,966.82	2.1	2.1	(2.3)
Banks and Financial Services	5,094.18	2.6	2.6	(2.9)
Industrials	3,963.75	0.5	0.5	(4.2)
Transportation	5,353.14	3.5	3.5	(2.1)
Real Estate	1,425.13	1.5	1.5	(6.8)
Insurance	2,748.90	3.5	3.5	9.9
Telecoms	2,388.71	3.5	3.5	7.2
Consumer Goods & Services	7,896.82	(0.6)	(0.6)	(5.2)
Al Rayan Islamic Index	5,072.19	1.8	1.8	(0.9)

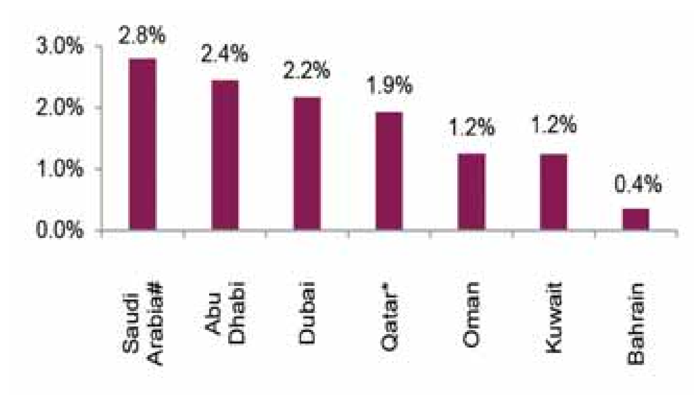
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

QSE Index and Volume



Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Weekly Index Performance



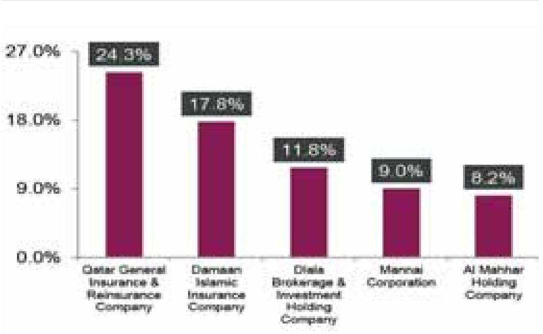
Source: Bloomberg

Regional Indices	Close	WTD%	MTD%	YTD%	Weekly Exchange Traded Value ($ mn)	Exchange Mkt. Cap. ($ mn)	TTM P/E**	P/B**	Dividend Yield
Qatar*	10,112.25	1.9	1.9	(6.0)	467.07	166,841.4	11.5	1.2	4.9
Dubai	5,917.96	2.2	2.1	(2.1)	730.23	267,208.2	9.5	1.7	5.3
Abu Dhabi	10,120.61	2.4	2.1	1.3	1,482.53	771,068.3	16.9	2.3	2.5
Saudi Arabia#	10,887.55	2.8	2.8	3.8	6,858.48	2,594,413.1	15.8	2.1	3.5
Kuwait	8,865.62	1.2	1.2	(0.5)	1,180.74	171,917.3	18.2	1.9	3.7
Oman	7,367.94	1.2	1.2	25.6	642.39	55,584.7	13.4	1.6	4.1
Bahrain	1,963.23	0.4	0.4	(5.0)	36.48	20,182.2	16.3	1.3	4.4

Source: Bloomberg

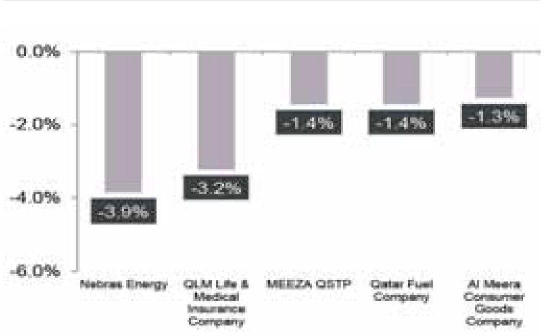
Qatar Stock Exchange

Top Five Gainers



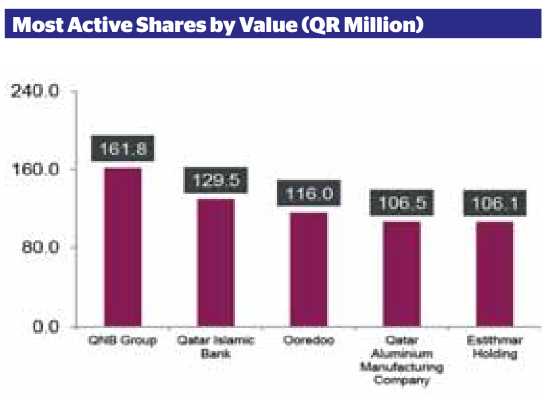
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Top Five Decliners



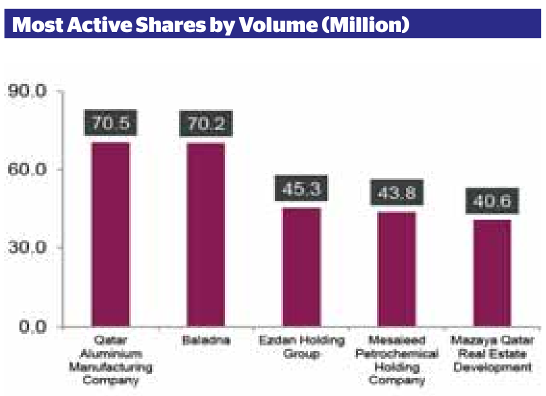
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Most Active Shares by Value (QR Million)



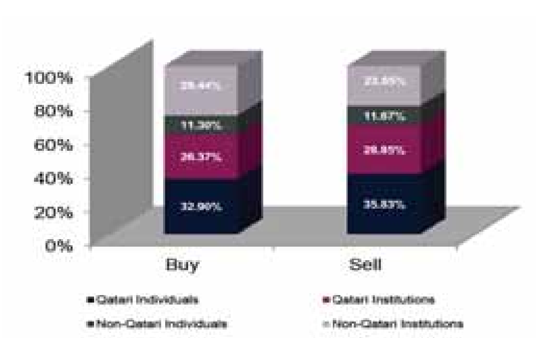
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

Most Active Shares by Volume (Million)



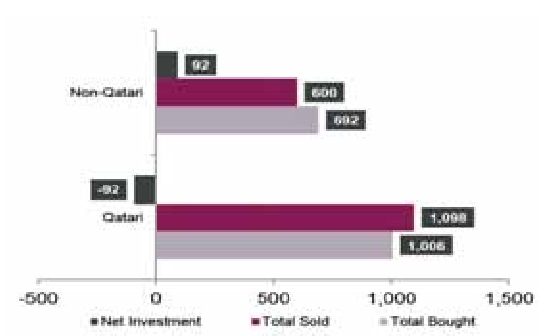
Source: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE)

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	17.15	3.50	(8.09)	158,405	9.8	1.5	4.2
Qatar Islamic Bank	22.39	3.37	(6.51)	52,906	11.4	1.7	4.0
Commercial Bank of Qatar	4.11	(0.27)	(2.17)	16,630	9.4	0.8	7.3
Doha Bank	2.89	(0.28)	0.70	8,960	9.9	0.8	5.2
Al Ahli Bank	4.18	2.90	11.52	10,666	11.9	1.5	6.0
Qatar International Islamic Bank	11.17	3.23	(2.27)	16,908	13.3	2.1	4.7
Al Rayan Bank	1.99	0.10	(9.21)	18,526	13.7	0.8	5.5
Lesha Bank	2.92	4.29	56.94	3,269	13.5	2.1	2.1
National Leasing	0.71	3.82	2.77	349	16.0	0.6	5.7
Dlala Holding	1.70	11.76	73.75	324	106.7	1.7	N/A
Qatar & Oman Investment	0.77	(0.26)	(17.68)	138	N/A	0.8	N/A
Islamic Holding Group	2.75	1.63	(13.98)	155	78.1	0.9	1.6
Dukhan Bank	3.27	0.62	(6.46)	17,116	12.7	1.2	4.9
Banking and Financial Services				**304,352**			
Zad Holding	12.33	(1.04)	(11.23)	3,544	15.2	1.9	5.5
Qatar German Co. for Medical Devices	1.28	1.99	(12.43)	148	14.3	N/A	N/A
Salam International Investment	0.77	4.76	6.20	881	8.5	0.6	7.8
Baladna	1.23	0.00	0.18	2,334	5.0	0.8	N/A
Medicare Group	5.52	0.42	(16.71)	1,554	18.1	1.5	4.0
Qatar Cinema & Film Distribution	2.34	0.00	(2.67)	147	14.6	1.1	4.3
Qatar Fuel	13.70	(1.44)	(9.69)	13,621	13.9	1.5	6.6
Widam Food	1.51	3.14	1.21	272	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mannai Corp.	5.32	9.02	18.62	2,427	8.7	2.2	5.6
Al Meera Consumer Goods	13.24	(1.27)	(9.13)	2,727	21.1	1.7	3.0
Mekdam Holding Group	2.16	2.23	(2.14)	367	10.6	1.4	6.4
Meeza QSTP	3.14	(1.44)	(7.53)	2,040	30.6	2.9	2.7
Al Faleh Education Holding	0.57	5.14	(16.23)	138	8.5	0.5	2.2
Al Mahhar Holding	2.23	8.16	1.74	461	9.6	1.2	6.7
Mosanada Facility Management Services	8.45	(0.60)	(11.06)	591	N/A	4.0	0.6
Consumer Goods and Services				**31,253**			
Qatar Industrial Manufacturing	2.20	0.73	(6.75)	1,043	9.7	0.5	5.9
Qatar National Cement	2.72	0.07	(1.38)	1,779	17.7	0.6	8.1
Industries Qatar	10.55	0.09	(11.57)	63,828	15.8	1.8	6.7
Qatari Investors Group	1.34	0.68	(8.91)	1,665	13.2	0.6	7.5
Nebras Energy	14.21	(3.86)	(5.58)	15,631	12.2	1.0	5.3
Aamal	0.72	2.13	(14.83)	4,523	11.0	0.5	7.0
Gulf International Services	1.92	5.22	(25.05)	3,559	6.7	0.8	5.2
Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding	1.13	3.02	3.11	14,159	41.0	0.9	3.7
Estithmar Holding	4.30	1.90	28.04	19,321	16.9	3.7	N/A
Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing	1.50	5.63	(6.25)	8,370	10.2	1.2	6.7
Industrials				**133,878**			
Qatar Insurance	1.93	0.05	(5.64)	6,287	11.2	1.0	5.7
QLM Life & Medical Insurance	2.13	(3.23)	(14.88)	745	11.6	1.1	4.7
Doha Insurance	3.00	2.70	16.99	1,501	7.0	1.1	6.2
Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance	2.55	24.28	64.77	2,231	16.4	0.6	2.0
Al Khaleej Takaful Insurance	2.95	2.26	29.39	752	10.1	1.2	5.1
Qatar Islamic Insurance	7.92	(0.86)	(10.45)	1,188	8.3	2.0	6.3
Damaan Islamic Insurance Company	5.17	17.79	18.93	1,034	9.9	1.7	4.8
Insurance				**13,738**			
United Development	0.79	(1.13)	(13.58)	2,794	6.9	0.2	7.0
Barwa Real Estate	2.38	2.15	(9.06)	9,257	8.1	0.4	7.6
Ezdan Real Estate	0.85	5.19	(19.47)	22,599	188.6	0.7	N/A
Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Development	0.55	(0.36)	(4.36)	548	15.5	0.5	N/A
Real Estate				**35,198**			
Ooredoo	12.97	3.76	(0.46)	41,546	11.0	1.4	5.8
Vodafone Qatar	2.65	2.63	8.74	11,197	14.4	2.2	4.5
Telecoms				**52,743**			
Qatar Navigation (Milaha)	10.18	2.80	(5.48)	11,566	10.2	0.6	4.4
Gulf Warehousing	2.47	5.73	10.45	145	11.7	0.6	4.0
Qatar Gas Transport (Nakilat)	4.29	3.87	(4.43)	23,768	14.1	1.6	3.4
Transportation				**35,479**			
Qatar Exchange				**608,244**			

Source: Bloomberg

Technical analysis of the QSE index

Source: Bloomberg

The QSE Index closed higher at 1.9% for this week and printed 10,112.25 last. The Index rebounded on the back of some positive news flow on the geopolitical tensions and regained the 10,000 psychological level. It is imperative for the Index to hold onto the psychological level, to further bounce back towards 10,300. It could take some risk 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

Brent crude climbs on uncertainty over end to Iran war

www.abhafoundation.org

Brent crude oil climbed more than $1 a barrel on Friday amid uncertainty over negotiations to determine control of and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a key global shipping artery. *Picture supplied by the Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah International Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development.*

Oil

Brent crude oil climbed more than $1 a barrel on Friday amid uncertainty over negotiations to determine control of and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a key global shipping artery.

Brent crude futures settled at $83.55 a barrel, and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude finished at $78.18 a barrel. For the week, Brent fell 7.3%, while WTI fell 7.7%.

Meanwhile, both Iran and Oman are reported to have agreed on the route ships would take through the strait, which lies between their two countries. It is unclear if the US will agree to these terms.

Iran is seeking fees of between 5% and 7% of the price of cargoes from ships using the strait, a senior Iranian official said. Oman, meanwhile, is discussing fees of about 3% while Washington wants no fees at all.

Gas

Asia spot liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices slipped this week but held near a four-month high, as the US-Iran war kept supply and shipping risks in focus while buying interest from South Asia offset muted demand from Japan and China.

The average LNG price for September delivery into northeast Asia was $20.40 per million British thermal units, down from $21.35 per mmBtu the week before.

Much of the spot flexibility comes from US contract volumes that Chinese and Japanese buyers are reselling rather than lifting.

In Europe, the Dutch TTF gas price settled at $18.70 per mmBtu, posting a weekly loss of 5.1%. Meanwhile, northwest European LNG prices softened as geopolitical risk premiums eased, following reports that US President Trump announced plans for talks with Iran.

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

Strong labour market underpins US economic resilience: QNB

QNA
Doha

QNB said the US economy continues to demonstrate resilience in the face of current domestic and external pressures, despite a moderation in the labour market and increased economic uncertainty.

In its weekly commentary, the bank said the moderation in the pace of hiring represents a gradual return to more balanced conditions rather than broad-based weakness, as the labour market remains resilient and wage growth continues to support household purchasing power.

QNB explained that the escalation of the conflict between the United States and Iran and the resulting spike in energy prices have weighed on business and consumer confidence, while raising concerns about renewed inflationary pressures and slower economic growth.

Against this backdrop, the resilience of the US labour market has become a key determinant of the economy's ability to withstand these headwinds and avoid a more pronounced slowdown.

The bank noted that recent labour market data offer reasons for cautious optimism, with a broad range of indicators continuing to point to fundamentally healthy labour market conditions. It pointed out that the unemployment rate has remained broadly unchanged from its average level last year, indicating that the moderation in hiring has not translated into a meaningful deterioration in overall labour market conditions.

QNB identified three key factors underpinning the resilience of the US labour market and the broader economy.

First, the bank said labour demand has moderated but remains consistent with a healthy labour market. Job creation has slowed over the past year, while firms have become more cautious about expanding their workforces amid elevated uncertainty and weaker business confidence.

At the same time, QNB noted that job openings have continued to decline, bringing the vacancy-to-unemployment ratio - the number of available jobs for every unemployed worker - from a peak of around 2.0 in early 2022 to close to 1.0 in the most recent release, broadly in line with its pre-pandemic average.

The bank explained that the ratio is closely monitored by the Federal Reserve as a measure of labour market tightness. A ratio well above one indicates that there are substantially more job vacancies than unemployed workers, often leading to stronger wage pressures, whereas a ratio closer to one suggests a more balanced labour market.

QNB pointed out that initial jobless claims and layoff rates remain historically low, indicating that firms continue to retain workers. Taken together, these indicators point to an orderly normalisation in labour demand rather than the broad-based deterioration that typically precedes a recession, the bank said.

Second, QNB said wage growth has continued to support household purchasing power. Although nominal wage growth has moderated from the elevated rates observed in recent years, workers' earnings have generally continued to outpace inflation over the past year, despite a temporary resurgence in price pressures following the energy shock.

The bank noted that wage increases have, on average, exceeded increases in the cost of living, allowing real wages - that is, wages after accounting for inflation - to continue increasing over the past year. As a result, households have experienced sustained gains in purchasing power, helping to support consumer spending, which accounts for around 70% of US GDP.

Consequently, QNB said, stronger household purchasing power continues to underpin domestic demand and reinforce the resilience of the broader economy. Regarding the third factor, the bank said artificial intelligence is beginning to reshape the labour market, although its aggregate impact remains limited.

QNB pointed out that the rapid adoption of AI technologies is changing hiring patterns across a growing number of industries, particularly in occupations involving routine cognitive tasks such as administrative support, customer service and software development. At the same time, demand for workers with AI-related and advanced technical skills has continued to increase.

Despite widespread concerns about job displacement, the bank said there is still limited evidence that AI has materially weakened overall labour market conditions. Employment continues to expand, unemployment remains close to levels consistent with full employment, and layoff rates remain historically low.

QNB said current evidence suggests that AI is primarily changing the composition of jobs and the skills demanded by employers rather than reducing total employment.

The bank concluded that the recent moderation in the US labour market should be interpreted as a normalisation rather than a sign of broad-based weakness.

Labour demand has become more balanced, while wage growth continues to support household purchasing power despite recent inflationary pressures. At the same time, the impact of AI on aggregate employment remains limited.

QNB said the resilience of the labor market continues to support consumer spending and strengthen the US economy's ability to withstand current challenges.

A drone view shows construction personnel working on a multi-home residential project by Shea Homes in Encinitas, California. QNB said the US economy continues to demonstrate resilience in the face of current domestic and external pressures, despite a moderation in the labour market and increased economic uncertainty.

German industry resilient in June but war and heatwave pose risks

AFP
Frankfurt

Industrial production and exports in Germany rose slightly in June, the country's statistics office said on Friday, but analysts warned of risks from rivers running dry and the Middle East war.

Exports rose 0.9% to reach a record of 139.3bn euros, their highest level since September 2022, and production volume nudged up 0.2% on the previous month, statistics office Destatis said.

Production rose fastest in the automotive and transport industries, Destatis said, and exports to European Union member states were strongest.

German industry has shown "surprising resilience" despite the Mideast war raising energy prices, ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski said.

"Despite the war in the Middle East and soaring energy prices, industrial production is proving resilient," he said. A run of brighter-than-expected data has boosted hopes that Germany is defying the worst of a war that has severely disrupted the supply of energy and petrochemical products through the Strait of Hormuz.

Industrial orders, a measure of future business activity, in June rose much faster than expected, Destatis said on Thursday.

Business sentiment in July also rose for the third month in a row, according to a survey by the Ifo institute.

But flare-ups in the Mideast war as well as low water levels on the Rhine, which are disrupting industrial transport, could complicate the picture, Brzeski said.

"The short-term outlook for the German economy is highly dependent on energy prices, the war in the Middle East and the current heatwave," he said. The Rhine river has reached record-low depths at a choke point near Kaub in western Germany amid a scorching summer and low rainfall, raising freight costs on an artery that normally carries about 80% of Germany's inland waterway traffic.

Mexico central bank holds rate at 6.5%

Reuters
Mexico City

Mexico's central bank held its benchmark interest rate at 6.50% on Thursday, extending a pause that began in June and pushing back the timeline for inflation to return to target, underscoring the challenge of taming price pressures in Latin America's second-largest economy. Banxico's five-member governing board voted unanimously to keep the rate unchanged, in line with market expectations, and said it would likely maintain the current setting for now.

"Both headline and core inflation are still expected to decline throughout the forecast horizon, albeit more gradually than previously anticipated," the bank said. Banxico left its end-2026 forecasts for both headline and core inflation unchanged at 3.5%, but said headline inflation would now converge to its 3% target only in the fourth quarter of 2027, later than the second quarter of 2027 projected previously. The central bank pointed to stubborn underlying price pressures, possible trade disruptions, global conflicts, climate-related shocks, rising business costs and the chance of a weaker peso as risks to higher inflation.

It also said changes in U.S. policy and worsening international tensions were making the outlook harder to predict.

The statement was slightly more hawkish in tone than the bank's June message, but analysts said it still suggested no rate move was coming soon. Goldman Sachs said the bank appeared likely to keep borrowing costs unchanged for the rest of 2026. Banxico also said the economy was likely to remain weak, with spare capacity lingering and clear risks that growth could disappoint.

Mexico's economy rebounded in the second quarter after contracting in the prior three-month period. Preliminary data released last week by statistics agency INEGI showed gross domestic product grew 1.5% in the second quarter from the previous quarter, after a 0.6% contraction in the first quarter.

Mexico's central bank held its benchmark interest rate at 6.50%, extending a pause that began in June and pushing back the timeline for inflation to return to target

Global equity funds draw inflows for an 11th consecutive week

Reuters
London

Global equity funds recorded inflows for an 11th consecutive week, as optimism about a strong earnings season and cooling crude oil prices boosted investors' appetite for risk assets.

Investors poured a net $21.15bn into global equity funds for the week ended August 5, following roughly $27.72bn in net purchases the previous week, according to LSEG Lipper data.

Amazon reported its strongest cloud growth in more than four years last week. Caterpillar, widely viewed as a bellwether for the global industrial economy, and Palantir Technologies posted strong results earlier this week.

Earnings data from around 808 MSCI World constituent companies that have reported so far show that their combined profits for the latest quarter rose 40.9% from a year earlier, with about 75% beating analysts' forecasts.

By region, European equity funds attracted $12.52bn-the largest weekly inflow since July 8-while Asian funds recorded $8.15bn in inflows. US funds, however, bucked the trend, with about $1.58bn in outflows. Among sectoral funds, inflows into technology funds eased to a six-week low of $1.44bn. Industrials, consumer discretionary and healthcare funds recorded net purchases of $1.08bn, $710mn and $653mn, respectively.

Meanwhile, investors added a net $12.27bn to global bond funds, marking their largest weekly net purchase in three weeks.

High-yield funds attracted $3.66bn, the largest weekly inflow in five weeks.

Short-term bond funds and loan participation funds recorded inflows of $3.43bn and $915mn, respectively.

Money market funds attracted net inflows of $57.48bn, ending a three-week run of net outflows. Among commodity funds, gold and other precious metals funds remained popular for a fourth consecutive week, attracting net inflows of $345mn. Energy funds, meanwhile, recorded a second straight weekly outflow of $153mn.

In emerging markets, equity funds gained momentum, with weekly inflows climbing to a more than five-month high of $9.26bn. Bond funds also attracted $303mn in net investments, data covering 28,959 funds showed.