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QSE rally gains strength as index eyes 10,699 point level

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DOHA: Shares in Qatar stock market ended the week on a positive note as shares registered strong gains. The Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) Index has risen by 110.42 points or around 1.04 percent to close at 10,699.28 points yesterday from 10,588.86 on Wednesday.

QSE figures attributed the rise to the positive performance of the banks and financial services, transportation, real estate, and insurance.

During yesterday's session the volume of shares traded stood at 246,351 million from 223,372 million on Wednesday and the value of shares reached QR643.091m from QR602.852m on March 4, as a result of implementing 42,007 deals in all sectors.

In the session, the shares of 32 companies rose, while the prices of 23 companies decreased, and one company maintained the previous closing price.

QSE figures attributed the rise to positive performance of banks and financial services, transportation, real estate, and insurance.



At the end of the trading session, the market capitalisation reached QR636.622bn, compared to the last trading session, which amounted to QR630.270bn. The indices of four sectors ended in green zone yesterday.

QSE Total Return Index gained 1.04 percent to 25,811.76, QSE Al Rayan Islamic index added 0.22 percent to 5,096.83 points and QSE All Share Index rose 1.24 percent to 4,094.58 points. The indices of banks and

financial services, transportation, real estate and insurance gained 2.6 percent, 1.52 percent, 0.39 percent, and 1.75 percent respectively.

Top gainers in yesterday's trade were Qatar Islamic Bank, QNB, Qatar Insurance, Qatar International Islamic Bank, and Mannai Corporation rising by 3.6 percent, 3.2 percent, 3 percent, 2.7 percent, and 2 percent respectively. While Qatar Aluminium Manufacturing, United Development Company,

Industries Qatar, Widam Food Company, and Zad Holding lost 6.9 percent, 5.3 percent, 2.5 percent, 2.4 percent, and 1.3 percent respectively.

Recently, QSE witnessed the successful listing of QNB Group's QR1bn bonds which represent the largest Qatari riyal-denominated issuance in the history of the local market.

The bonds were offered exclusively to international investors and were fully subscribed by a diversified investor base, reflecting strong confidence in QNB Group's financial strength, credit profile, and regional leadership, as well as in the resilience and stability of Qatar's financial system.

The issuance totals QR1bn with a one-year tenor and an annual coupon rate of 4 percent. The transaction forms part of QNB Group's broader funding diversification strategy, reinforcing its prudent liquidity management and ability to access international capital in local currency.

IMF Managing Director warns of repercussions of conflict in Middle East on global economy

BANGKOK: The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned of the repercussions of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East on the global economy.

Global economic resilience has been tested yet again by the new conflict in the Middle East, said Kristalina Georgieva (pictured) at the Asia in 2050 Conference in Bangkok.

"This conflict, if it proves to be more prolonged, has obvious potential to affect global energy prices, market sentiment, growth, and inflation, placing new demands on policymakers," she added.

Underscoring uncertainty is the new normal, Georgieva warned that new shocks in different shapes and sizes will keep coming.

For most of Asia, what is at stake is energy security and, through that, confidence, said Georgieva, noting that stock markets are already reacting. IMF, as guardian of



Underscoring uncertainty is the new normal, Georgieva warned that new shocks in different shapes and sizes will keep coming.

international economic and financial stability, is watching the events unfold very carefully, she said, adding that the IMF is assessing and quantifying the regional and global economic ramifications. — QNA

AI giants promise Trump to pay for increased energy needs

NEW YORK: Seven US tech giants at the forefront of artificial intelligence committed to offset the costs of their increased electricity needs through investments in energy infrastructure.

To develop and use AI, the main players in the sector use data centers, whose chips and servers consume a lot of electricity.

But installed energy capacity is not growing as fast as demand, which has

led to a sharp rise in electricity prices in many parts of the United States, a phenomenon that has become a campaign issue in the run-up to the November midterm elections.

The tech companies promised to finance new capacity when a center is built and to cover any costs of upgrading the grid.

Data centers accounted for 4.4 percent of total electricity

To develop and use AI, the main players in the sector use data centers, whose chips and servers consume a lot of electricity.

consumption in the United States in 2023, according to the Department of Energy, which predicts that the

proportion could reach as much as 12.0 percent by 2028.

The Trump administration announced that Google, Microsoft, Meta, Oracle, xAI, OpenAI, and Amazon had agreed to the five principles of its plans to make the installation of new data centers a benefit to all.

President Donald Trump "is ensuring that data centers address

affordability and benefit ALL American households and businesses," the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy said in a post on X.

"Although electricity demand is increasing, Americans won't be footing the bill," it added.

The program also includes initiatives to recruit from local populations and offer training. — AFP



Dear Shareholders of Barwa Real Estate Company
Peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you,

NOTICE

INVITATION TO ATTEND THE ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

Due to the recent developments in the country, in order to ensure the safety of everyone, and in compliance with the governmental directives issued on precautionary measures, we would like to note that it has been decided to hold the Ordinary General Assembly meeting remotely (online) via ZOOM application, at the same time and date on Sunday, March 8, 2026, at 09:30 pm.

Registration Procedure

Shareholders wishing to attend (remotely) should follow the following steps:

- Visit the registration center on the date of the AGM at the Millennium Plaza Hotel- First Floor, starting at 04:00 pm.
- Collect and fill out the list of candidates for membership of the Board of Directors to begin voting, and then place it in the elections box.
- Receive the link from the registration officer to attend and participate in the meeting remotely.

For enquiries, please call +974-33339700.

We are thankful and appreciate your good cooperation

Barwa Real Estate Company



Google opens AI centre as Berlin defends US tech reliance

BERLIN: Google opened an AI centre in Berlin yesterday, pledging to step up innovation in the German capital, which boasts a dynamic start-up scene and strong academic and research institutions.

German politicians hailed the move despite growing fears Europe is overly reliant on US tech giants that its own corporate players are struggling to match, particularly in artificial intelligence.

Google, a major AI player alongside US firms such as Anthropic, OpenAI and Microsoft, announced a €5.5bn (\$6.4bn) investment drive in Germany last November.

"We have a whole range of outstanding researchers who are working on AI here in Berlin," said Philipp Justus, Google's country manager for Germany and VP Central Europe.

"This centre is intended to



Officials during the AI centre inauguration in Berlin, Germany, yesterday.

enable exchange with the academic community, with policy-makers, and ultimately also with companies that are driving forward the application of AI."

In an expansion of its Berlin site, Google added an "AI demo space" for new innovations, a separate floor for research

teams and an area where AI-focused events will be held.

Berlin mayor Kai Wegner said the move "underscores Berlin's international significance as a science and technology hub -- with a dynamic start-up scene, strong universities and an open society that

enables and promotes innovation".

Karsten Wildberger, minister for digital transformation, stressed that "digital sovereignty is extremely important for Germany and Europe".

"But that does not mean doing everything alone," he said.

"We continue to work in equal partnerships."

He added that it was "important that we become much more active in developing things under our own steam", listing key areas that included IT infrastructure and cloud computing.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz's coalition has signalled it wants to make progress on the AI front as part of efforts to revive the struggling economy.

There have been a flurry of announcements related to AI recently, including from Deutsche Telekom and software company SAP.

But a good number of investments still come from the United States, fuelling worries at a time of strained ties under the administration of President Donald Trump.

"Digital sovereignty" has been the goal, with the aim of ensuring that Europeans' data

is stored at home and protected under local laws, and reducing a heavy reliance on overseas players in the digital domain.

At a summit dedicated to the topic in November in Berlin, Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron backed the idea of favouring European firms in a bid to develop regional champions.

Despite its ambitions, Germany still faces "enormous" challenges to build up AI infrastructure and data storage capacities, said Janis Hecker of the digital business association Bitkom.

The government still "underestimates the importance of these technologies for value creation, but also for sovereignty and the defence of our values", he said.

The United States builds more computing capacity each year than Germany has in total, the group says. — **AFP**

Finland's economy returns to growth

HELSINKI: Finland's economy emerged from recession in the final quarter of 2025 and has shifted to a modest growth path, with Danske Bank forecasting a further pickup in the coming years.

In its Economic Outlook released Wednesday, Danske Bank projected Finland's gross domestic product (GDP) to expand by 1.5 percent in 2026 and 1.9 percent in 2027.

The bank said the prolonged conflict in the Middle East and disruptions in energy markets pose key risks to the forecast, though it expects any impact to be temporary. The rebound is being supported by improving industrial orders, firmer export demand from major trading partners, and rising real wages.

Danske Bank noted that stronger industrial activity in key markets such as Germany and Sweden is bolstering demand for Finnish exports. It added that Finland's cost competitiveness, Germany's investment package and increased European defense spending also support the export outlook.

"The economic turnaround has finally begun, and growth has picked up. The outlook for industry and exports has improved, and household consumption is growing as real incomes continue to rise," Minna Kuusisto, chief economist at Danske Bank, said in the bank's press release. Danske Bank expects productive investment to strengthen and private investment to increase, particularly in data center projects and the green transition. It cautioned, however, that low industrial capacity utilisation could slow the translation of improving sentiment into concrete investments and hiring.

According to Statistics Finland data released, Finland's economy expanded in 2025, signaling a fragile growth after a period of stagnation. GDP increased by 0.2 percent for the year, while the fourth quarter posted 0.4 percent growth from the previous quarter. — **XINHUA**

China targets growth in 2026 and beyond amid weakening global economy

BEIJING: China yesterday set an economic growth target of 4.5 to 5 percent for 2026, aiming for a good start to the new five-year plan that charts the course for high-quality development and offers much-needed certainty to a troubled world economy.

The GDP growth target is well aligned with China's long-range objectives through the year 2035 and broadly in line with the long-term growth potential of China's economy, said a government work report submitted to the country's top legislature for deliberation.

China's economic growth target for 2026 is proactive and pragmatic, reflecting a broad assessment of domestic conditions and shifts in the external environment, said Shen Danyang, head of the group responsible for drafting this year's government work report.

The projected pace would also be among the highest for major economies globally, Shen said.

"The signal this target sends to the international community is clear that China is no longer pursuing growth speed alone," said Zhang Ying, associate dean of the Guanghua School of Management at Peking University, in an interview with Xinhua. "This year's target reflects China's firm commitment to high-quality development."

The country has made it clear that it will strive for better practice regarding this year's growth target, and favorable conditions for achieving this target are in place, according to the report. The government work report outlined this year's major tasks, including building a robust domestic market,



The GDP growth target is well aligned with China's long-range objectives through the year 2035 and long-term economic growth.

fostering new growth drivers at a faster pace, and moving faster to achieve greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology.

To achieve these goals, China will continue to implement a more proactive

fiscal policy and apply an appropriately accommodative monetary policy. The orientations highlight policy continuity and offer further assurance to a global economy unnerved by trade and geopolitical tensions. China's global economic heft

means its policy moves are pivotal to the world economy. Over the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), China saw its economy grow at an average annual pace of 5.4 percent, well above the global average, and contributed around 30 percent of global growth.

The country has remained the world's second-largest importer for 16 consecutive years, has cemented its position as the world's largest trader of goods, and has become a major trading partner of more than 160 countries and regions.

The weight of the role is only set to grow. According to a World Bank forecast, global growth is projected to ease to 2.6 percent in 2026. If the forecast holds, the 2020s are on track to be the weakest decade for global growth since the 1960s. — **XINHUA**

South Korean stocks roar back after two-day rout

SEOUL: South Korean stocks staged a sharp rebound yesterday, partially recovering from a two-day rout that rattled local markets. Surging buying pressure lifted the benchmark Kospi more than 9 percent and the secondary Kosdaq over 14 percent, triggering buy-side sidecars on both bourses.

Amid market turbulence, President Lee Jae Myung urged the government to swiftly implement the 100 trillion won (\$68bn) market stabilisation program designed to curb instability in the capital market.

"We must respond proactively to the heightened volatility in financial markets, including stocks and the foreign exchange market," he said at a Cabinet meeting yesterday, citing tensions in the Middle East as a threat to investor confidence.

The benchmark Kospi closed at 5,583.9, gaining 490.36 points, or 9.63 percent, from the previous session. After opening at 5,250.92, the index continued to extend its gains and touched an intraday high of 5,715.3, advancing 12.21 percent.

The Kospi's gain of 490.36 points on the day marked an all-time high. The previous record was 338.41 points, set on Feb. 3. The 9.63 percent



An electronic board showing Seoul shares in a dealing room at the Hana Bank headquarters.

increase is the second-largest on record, following the 11.95 percent surge on Oct. 30, 2008.

The rebound follows one of the steepest two-day declines on record for the Kospi. The index had plunged 7.24 percent on Tuesday and 12.06 percent on Wednesday.

Retail investors led the rally, buying a net 1.79 trillion won worth of shares on the main market. Foreign investors started the session as net buyers, but later shifted to net selling, offloading a total of 144.5bn won. Institutional investors dumped 1.72 trillion won. Most large-cap stocks rebounded strongly. All of the top 100 companies by market capitalization on the Kospi recorded gains during the session. Shares of Samsung

Electronics and SK hynix jumped 11.27 percent and 10.84 percent, respectively. Hyundai Motor advanced 9.38 percent, while LG Energy Solution gained 6.91 percent.

The tech-heavy Kosdaq also surged, closing at 1,116.41, climbing 14.1 percent, the largest jump in the bourse's history, surpassing the previous record of 11.47 percent, also set on Oct. 30, 2008.

Opening at 1,023.84, the index reclaimed the 1,000-point threshold and extended its gains further through the session. During trading, it touched as high as 1,149.54.

Amid the steep early rally, buy-side sidecars were triggered on both the Kospi and Kosdaq at 9:06 a.m. — **THE KOREA HERALD**

Philippine inflation climbs to 2.4% in February 2026

MANILA: The Philippines' year-on-year headline inflation accelerated to 2.4 percent in February from 2 percent in January, driven mainly by a faster annual increase in food prices, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said yesterday.

"The uptrend in the overall inflation in February 2026 was primarily influenced by the faster annual increment in the index of the heavily weighted food and non-alcoholic beverages at 1.8 percent during the month from 1.1 percent in January 2026," PSA Chief Claire Dennis Mapa said at a press briefing.

PSA data showed that food inflation at the national level recorded a faster annual increase of 1.6 percent in February 2026 from 0.7 percent in the previous month.

In February 2025, food inflation was higher at 2.6 percent.

Meanwhile, core inflation, which excludes selected food and energy items, rose to 2.9 percent in February 2026 from 2.8 percent in January, and was higher than the 2.4 percent recorded in February 2025.

"Overall price conditions remain stable. However, we

are mindful of recent geopolitical developments, which we are closely monitoring, along with domestic supply conditions of key commodities," said Department of Economy, Planning, and Development Secretary Arsenio Balisacan.

Despite the slight uptick, inflation remains within the government's target range, suggesting that overall price pressures in the economy are still manageable.

Economists noted that food supply conditions, particularly for key staples such as rice, meat and vegetables, will continue to play a crucial role in shaping inflation trends in the coming months.

Authorities are also keeping a close watch on global factors, including geopolitical tensions and fluctuations in energy prices, which could affect transport and production costs.

Moving forward, policymakers are expected to maintain close coordination to ensure adequate food supply, manage potential supply disruptions and sustain stable prices, while supporting economic growth and household purchasing power. — **XINHUA**

US stocks retreat as oil prices jump again

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks retreated yesterday as oil market volatility triggered by the Middle East war kept investors on guard.

"Oil is driving stocks because oil markets have a much clearer read on what's going on in the Persian Gulf than equity traders do," said Steve Sosnick of Interactive Brokers.

"I think you're going to get these rushes on both sides where people are just going to rush in when they feel hopeful, they're going to rush out when they don't." About 15 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.8 percent at 48,374.36.

The broad-based S&P 500 declined 0.4 percent to 6,845.76, while the tech-rich



Traders work on the floor at New York Stock Exchange in US.

Nasdaq Composite Index shed 0.2 percent to 22,765.72.

US oil prices were up more than four percent, a rise that will keep inflation worries prominent. Besides the virtual halt to traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, Briefing.com cited an unconfirmed report that Iran

struck a tanker off the coast of Iraq.

Among individual companies, Broadcom climbed 2.2 percent as it reported a 29 percent jump in quarterly revenue to \$19.3bn amid robust demand for artificial intelligence products. — **AFP**

Kenya's flower industry faces export disruptions

NAIROBI: Kenya's flower sector is facing export disruptions as the conflict escalates in the Middle East, an industry association said yesterday.

Clement Tulezi (pictured), chief executive officer of the Kenya Flower Council (KFC), said that the Middle East remains an important destination for the country's flowers, accounting for approximately 10 to 15 percent of total flower exports, with key markets including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

"Kenya's flower industry depends heavily on reliable air freight to deliver a highly perishable product to global markets, and exporters are making every effort to divert shipments to alternative markets, resulting in lower prices and additional logistical costs," Tulezi told Xinhua.



According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the flower sector is one of the country's leading sources of foreign exchange, alongside diaspora remittances, tourism, tea and coffee. Based on industry estimates, Tulezi said that the disruptions have already resulted in losses or disruptions of flower exports worth between \$1.6m and

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\$1.8m over the past five days.

The KFC said that it is working closely with exporters, airlines, freight operators and government agencies to manage the situation and minimize losses by identifying new cargo routes and exploring temporary relief measures for affected shipments. — **XINHUA**