HE al-Attiyah, HE al-Sada among other dignitaries at the Quarterly CEO Roundtable' hosted by The Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah International Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development in Doha yesterday.

Al-Attiyah Foundation holds 'CEO Roundtable' on global climate action

The Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah International Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development hosted its 'Quarterly CEO Roundtable' at the Four Seasons Doha yesterday.

The backdrop for the 'CEO Roundtable' dialogue was the increasing top-down/bottom-up climate action being witnessed globally. The top-down action by governments has increased in speed and scale over the past five years, with many countries making serious commitments, collectively and individually. The bottom-up actions by the private sector and other stakeholders are outpacing the international process, on many fronts.

HE Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah, chairman, The Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah International Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development, said, "As chairman of the leading think tank in the Middle East, I am delighted to host our 5th CEO Roundtable. Sharing our knowledge is a vital step in identifying new opportunities for Qatar and others. Collaboration and partnership are always fruitful for all parties, and by the application of science, we can create better societies."

As an intimate group, the CEOs from Qatar's energy and business sectors came together to share their own views and company's response to the Paris Agreement and beyond. The conversations were private but the content will be published in a white paper made available to members on the foundation's website.

The foundation attracted world renowned guest speakers to the event including Dr Dirk Forrister, CEO and President, International Emissions Trading Association (IETA), Dr Karsten Sach, member of the GCF Board, and David Hone, Chief Climate Change Advisor, Shell International.

HE the Minister of Energy and Industry, Dr Mohamed bin Saleh al-Sada was among the dignitaries present.

The group touched upon the local and global implications of the Paris Agreement, Qatar's ecological footprint and the major challenges faced by oil and gas companies as the world moves towards a low carbon economy.

The Al-Attiyah Foundation examines energy and sustainable development related themes and uses its influence to help shape the global landscape. The foundation's chairman and founder al-Attiyah has been bestowed with many awards during his illustrious career, including his appointment as Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Industry and managing director of Qatar Petroleum. He is the driving force behind the foundation.

Main QSE index to figure Al Meera, QFB, Mazaya Qatar from Oct 1

The Qatar Stock Exchange's (QSE) main barometer will figure Al Meera Consumer Goods Company, Qatar First Bank (QFB) and Mazaya Qatar from October 1, replacing Aamal Company and Qatar Insurance.
In its semi-annual review of the indices, the bourse also announced that Qatar Islamic Insurance would join Al Rayan Islamic Index. Under the new index practices, a review is carried out twice a year to ensure that the selection and weighting of the constituents continues to reflect the purpose of the index.
The main 20-stock barometer Qatar Index will continue to have QNB, Industries Qatar (IQ), Masraf Al Rayan, Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB), Ooredoo, Qatar Electricity and Water, Barwa, Nakilat, Commercial Bank, QIIB, Milaha, Qatari Investors Group (QIG), United Development Company (UDC), Doha Bank, Gulf International Services, Vodafone Qatar and Medicare Group (MCG).
Apart from Qatar Islamic Insurance, the other constituents of Al Rayan Islamic Index are Masraf Al Rayan, IQ, QIB, Barwa, Gulf Warehousing, UDC, Vodafone Qatar, QIG, MCG, Aamal Company, Al Meera, QIIB, Qatar First Bank, Qatar National Cement, Qatar Industrial Manufacturing Company, Widam Food (formerly Mawashi) and Mazaya Qatar.
The bourse has seven sectors — banks and financial services (with 13 constituents), insurance (five), industrials (nine), real estate (four), telecom (two), transportation (three) and consumer goods and services (nine) in the 'All Share Index', which comprises listed stocks with annual share velocity greater than 1%.
Ahli Bank would be removed from All Share Index and Banks and Financial Services indices.
The QSE had revised its key benchmark methodology, stipulating that at least 80% of the trading days and a minimum of 5% annualised velocity during the final quarter of the 12-month review period.
The changes to the index methodology of QSE Index comes following a decision by the QSE Index Committee and the approval of the Qatar Financial Markets Authority.
The decision by the index committee is designed to enhance the tradability of the index and ensure that consistent liquidity is a determinant of index inclusion.

S&P affirms its 'BBB+' ratings on Doha Bank Assurance Co

Standard and Poor's (S&P), an international credit rating agency, has affirmed its 'BBB+' long-term insurer financial strength and counterparty credit ratings on Doha Bank Assurance Company (DBAC) and removed the ratings from "credit watch with negative implications".
"We continue to view DBAC as a strategically important subsidiary of Doha Bank, given its contribution to the bank's product offering, as well as integration of management and some operational functions. Our ratings on DBAC therefore benefit from two notches of support above its standalone credit profile," S&P said.
As of June 30, 2017, DBAC's gross written premiums increased in line with its expectations by about 6% to QR47.1mn from QR44.3mn during the first six months of 2016, as the insurer grew its motor insurance portfolio.
The company's net profit after tax reduced to about QR1.4mn from QR3.9mn at mid-year 2016. The reduction in net profit was mainly on a significant increase in motor insurance claims during the first six months of 2017.
"We therefore expect that, provided there is no further deterioration in operating performance, DBAC's net profit after tax for full-year 2017 will be broadly in line with its result at year-end 2016, when the company recorded a net profit after tax of QR3.1mn," the rating agency said.
Continuing to monitor the effect of the ongoing boycott of Qatar's economy on DBAC's operations, S&P said although Qatari equities have seen losses, DBAC has a limited investment allocation to this class so the effect on performance is "limited".
Should the current political situation persist for an extended period, DBAC might be exposed to a general slowdown in both new business and collections of outstanding receivables, it said, adding in this scenario, "We would reassess our expectations for the company's growth and profitability."
Highlighting that DBAC's capital adequacy remains above its 'AAA' benchmark and its liquidity position is "exceptional", it said in the event of a general tightening of liquidity and a slowdown in premium collections, these qualities would help to insulate the insurance company and preserve its claims-paying ability.
"We expect that DBAC's capital adequacy will remain at the 'AAA' level (based on our model), supporting what we regard as ambitious growth plans over the next two years. We also anticipate that DBAC will continue to expand its cooperation with its parent to strengthen its market position through profitable growth," S&P said.

Qatar startups, manufacturing sector gain more govt support

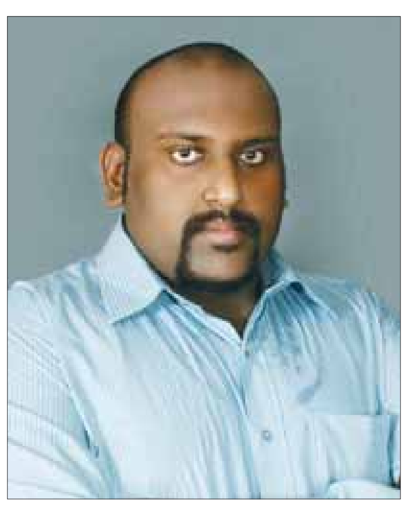
By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter

Three months into the Saudi-imposed economic blockade, Qatar startups and the manufacturing sector "are getting more support" from the government, which has laid out a number of self-sufficiency and sustainability-related projects, an official of a Qatari company said.

"As a nation we are aiming to become more self-sufficient; considering the amount of Qatar's wealth, this goal can be achieved through the wise leadership of His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani. This will also enable the government to develop areas it had not focused on earlier.

"Today, several new startups are getting a major push from the Qatari government and companies are beginning to invest more in newer projects. So definitely the blockade has acted as a great stimulant for the development of local businesses in Qatar, said Anoop Krishnan, the COO of end-to-end IT solutions provider Cherry Computer.

Prior to the blockade, Krishnan said the market was rife with "freelancers" or unregistered companies that are operating in some Asian and GCC countries. However, increased focus on local companies since June 5 helped considerably trim down the presence of freelancers in the market, "some of which do not even have a physical presence in Qatar," Krishnan said.


Krishnan: A major push.

"While there are still some freelancers operating in the market, the focus on local businesses since the blockade was a positive development for companies like us," Krishnan pointed out.

He also underpinned the role of Qatar's small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector in nation-building and economic development. "Two of the primary roles of the SME sector would be wealth creation and employment generation in the country," he said.

Krishnan said the development of Qatar's SME sector will create a spill-over effect on less-developed areas around the country when SMEs start setting up new businesses in less populated locations "to maintain cheaper operating costs."

"The growth of industries and business in these areas will lead to great infrastructural development like better roads, new schools, hospitals, shopping malls, and other public and private services that would otherwise have taken a different timeframe had there not been a blockade.

"Adding to this is the already developing Qatar Rail project, which is going to interconnect neighbouring communities. There will be a serious growth in GDP and per capita income, which is again one of the essential goals of economic development," Krishnan stressed.

The expected rise in the standard of living in Qatar and infrastructural development in areas like education, healthcare, and other public services "would be a direct result of the country's growing entrepreneurship culture," Krishnan said.

Local retail investors turn buyers on QSE

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

Local retail investors yesterday turned net buyers on the Qatar Stock Exchange, which otherwise kept weakening to settle below 8,500 points.

An across-the-board selling led the 20-stock Qatar Index shrink 0.71% to a multi-year low of 8,471.6 points and market capitalisation erode 0.74% to QR460.71bn.

Islamic equities were seen declining faster than the main index in the bourse, whose year-to-date losses were at 18.83%.

Opening weak but to remain above 8,500 levels, the market saw strong selling pressure within the first 90 minutes, taking the index to a low of below 8,400 points, after which there was a sustained buying support in the remainder of the session but overall it settled 61 points lower.

Local retail investors turned net buyers to the extent of QR18.33mn compared with net sellers of QR5.11mn on September 11

Trade turnover and volumes were on the decline on the market, where telecom and banking sectors together accounted for about 77% of the total volumes.

The Total Return Index shed 0.71% to 14,206.37 points, Al Rayan Islamic Index by 0.82% to 3,389.5 points and All Share Index by 0.79% to 2,410.26 points.

The telecom index tanked 1.97%, transport (1.64%), realty (1.51%), industrials (1.2%), consumer goods (0.36%), insurance (0.31%) and banks and financial services (0.24%).

Major gainers included Qatar Islamic Bank, Doha Bank, Alijarah Holding, Nakilat, Mazaya Qatar and Medicare Group; while Aamal Company, Gulf International Services, Ooredoo, QIIB, Qatar First Bank, Dlala, Qatari German Company for Medical Devices, Milaha, Vodafone Qatar, Ezdan and Mazaya Qatar were among the losers.

Local retail investors turned net buyers to the extent of QR18.33mn compared with net sellers of QR5.11mn on September 11. Non-Qatari institutions' net profit booking weakened to QR18.64mn against QR20.24mn the previous day.

However, the GCC (Gulf Co-operation Council) retail investors were net sellers to the tune of QR6.09mn compared with net buyers of QR0.89mn on Monday.

Non-Qatari individual investors also turned net sellers to the extent of QR0.91mn against net buyers of QR2.31mn on September 11.

The GCC institutions' net profit booking increased perceptibly to QR4.81mn compared to QR0.51mn the previous day.

Domestic institutions' net buying weakened considerably to QR12.12mn against QR22.69mn on Monday.

Total trade volumes fell 18% to 9.05mn shares and value by 12% to QR205.74mn, while deals were up 4% to 3,229.

There was 77% plunge in the industrials sector's trade volume to 0.68mn equities, 42% in value to QR26.55mn and 7% in transactions to 615.

The real estate sector's trade volume plummeted 27% to 0.59mn stocks and value by 12% to QR10.78mn, whereas deals were up 1% to 375.

The banks and financial services sector saw 25% increase in trade volume to 2.52mn shares and 23% in value to QR95.09mn but on 2% jump in transactions to 1,159.

However, the insurance sector's trade volume almost quadrupled to 0.19mn equities and value also almost quadrupled to QR11.47mn on 39% increase in deals to 163.

The transport sector's trade volume more than doubled to 0.45mn stocks and value also more than doubled to QR13.77mn on 72% expansion in transactions to 369.

The telecom sector reported 28% surge in trade volume to 4.44mn shares and 10% in value to QR40.36mn but on 17% decline in deals to 354.

The consumer goods sector's trade volume soared 27% to 0.19mn equities, value by 23% to QR7.71mn and transactions by 7% to 194.

In the debt market, there was no trading of treasury bills and government bonds.

Turkish Airlines profits in Africa, where others fear to fly

Reuters
Nairobi

When Turkish Airlines opened a direct daily route to a war-ravaged African state, industry insiders were sceptical. Not anymore.
"Somalia is one of our most profitable destinations worldwide," Mustafa Ozkahraman, Kenya country manager for Turkish Airlines, told Reuters in an interview. "Because we are the only (international airline). The first and the only one."
The Istanbul-based carrier is replicating the move across Africa, expanding to destinations shunned by others.
The move comes as political unrest at home last year pushed the airline into the red for the first time in 17 years.
In 2011, Turkish Airlines flew to 14 African cities. By the end of this year, it will operate 52 routes from Istanbul across Africa, after launching a route to Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone.
From January to June, just under a tenth of total passenger and cargo revenues came from Africa, according to results for the first half of 2017 that showed a net loss of $434mn.
Turkish Airlines, which is 49 % state-owned, is bullish on Africa, a continent of 1bn people. Ozkahraman denied the growing ties between Ankara and many African states drove the airline's strategy.
"A lot of people would think our flights to Somalia were not business-related," he said."(But) we do the feasibility and we have to believe the route will be profitable, either now or imminently." He declined to give a specific breakdown on profits for African flights, but said routes like the daily flight on a wide-body jet from the Nigerian city of Lagos were critical to the airline's bottom line.
Despite challenges like poor security or electricity cuts at some airports, such flights feed passengers into Turkish Airline's hub, making routes like Istanbul to London profitable. "You have to have those destinations to make your hub busy and your profitable destinations more profitable," he said.
Last year the company posted a net loss for the first time since 2000, after a demand slump caused by political turmoil and militant attacks at home.
Ozkahraman said some of the shortfall was also due to new planes — 210 have been ordered, he said.
Load factors — a measure of how full planes are — are over 70 % on many African routes, just below the airline's global average of 80 %, he added.
The wide network means that, unlike Ethiopian Airlines, Turkish does not partner with smaller African carriers notorious for poor service.
It opened a business class lounge in Nairobi's airport in July 2016, its second international lounge after Moscow.