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COUNTRY RISK WEEKLY BULLETIN

NEWS HEADLINES

WORLD

Corporate debt of $13.4 trillion due between October 2025 and end-2030

S&P Global Ratings indicated that $13.4 trillion (tn) in rated corporate debt will mature between October 2025 and December 2030. It noted that $397bn in corporate debt are due in the fourth quarter of 2025, $2.45tn mature in 2026, $2.6tn are payable in 2027, $3tn come due in 2028, $2.6tn have to be settled in 2029, and $2.3tn mature in 2030. The geographic distribution of debt maturities shows that the U.S. has $6.3tn in corporate debt that is due between October 2025 and end-2030, or 47% of the total, followed by the debt of European companies with $5.1tn (37.8%), while the rest of the world has $2.05tn in maturing debt (15.3%). Also, it noted that $9.9tn in investment-grade corporate debt, or 74% of the due debt, mature between October 2025 and December 2030, while $3.5tn in speculative-grade corporate debt (26%) come due during the covered period. It added that the maturing debt of non-financial companies stands at $8.3tn and accounts for 61.8% of the due debt between October 2025 and end-2030, while the maturing debt of financial institutions stands at $5.1tn (38.2% of total). Further, the due debt of consumer product firms totals $877.1bn and accounts for 6.6% of maturing non-financial corporate debt in the covered period, followed by the debt of utilities companies with $828bn (6.2%), the healthcare sector's debt with $806bn (6%), and the debt of media & entertainment firms with $744bn (5.6%).

Source: S&P Global Ratings

Level of female entrepreneurial activity varies across regions

Figures issued by Babson College and the London Business School shows that 10.7% of females worldwide were involved in early-stage business entrepreneurial activities in 2024 compared to 13.2% of males who were engaged in startup-building initiatives. Regionally, 20.3% of females in Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC) were involved early-stage businesses, followed by 18.4% in North America, 12% in the Middle East & Africa (ME&A), 9.9% in Central & East Asia (CEA), and 7.5% in Europe. In comparison, 22.2% of males in LAC were engaged in early-stage businesses, followed by 21.9% of males in North America, 15.1% in the ME&A region, 11.7% in CEA, and 9.9% in Europe. In parallel, the survey indicated that 5.6% of females worldwide were running established firms compared to 8.8% of males who were managing such companies in 2024. Regionally, 7.6% of females were managing established companies in CEA, followed by 5.9% in LAC, 5.5% in Europe, 5.1% in North America, and 4.5% in the ME&A region. In comparison, 10.6% of males were running established firms in CEA, followed by 9.5% in LAC, 8.7% in Europe, 8.2% in in the ME&A region, and 7.9% in North America. Further, the survey revealed that 6.6% of females in LAC shut down their businesses in 2024, followed by 4.5% in the ME&A region, 4.3% in North America, 2.5% in Europe, and 2.4% in CEA; while 6.1% of males in the ME&A region discontinued their businesses, followed by 5.2% in North America, 5.1% in LAC, 3.1% in CEA, and 2.9% in Europe.

Source: Babson College, London Business School

MENA

Stock markets down 0.5% in first 11 months of 2025

Arab stock markets regressed by 0.5%, while Gulf Cooperation Council equity markets decreased by 1.3% in the first 11 months of 2025 relative to contractions of 1.2% and 0.8%, respectively, in the same period of 2024. In comparison, global equity markets increased by 19.2% and emerging market equities surged by 20% in the first 11 months of 2025. Activity on the Damascus Securities Exchange, based on the official stock market index, jumped by 40.4% in the first 11 months of 2025, the Amman Stock Exchange advanced by 38%, the Egyptian Exchange appreciated by 37%, the Tunis Bourse improved by 32.3%, the Casablanca Stock Exchange gained 26%, and the Muscat Securities Market yielded 24.7%. Also, the Boursa Kuwait increased by 24%, the Palestine Exchange grew by 20%, the Dubai Financial Market advanced by 13%, the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange improved by 3.5%, the Bahrain Bourse appreciated by 2.7%, and the Qatar Stock Exchange yielded 0.4% in the covered period. In contrast, the Beirut Stock Exchange dropped by 23.6% in the first 11 months of 2025, the Saudi Stock Exchange declined by 12%, and the Iraq Stock Exchange regressed by 11%.

Source: Local stock markets, S&P Pan Arab Composite Index, STOXX GCC Total Market Index, LSEG Workspace, Byblos Research

UAE

Earnings of Abu Dhabi firms up 15%, profits of Dubai firms up 14% in first nine months of 2025

The net income of 77 companies listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange that published their financial results totaled AED115.2bn, or $31.4bn, in the first nine months of 2025, constituting a rise of 14.8% from AED100.3bn, or $27.3bn in the same period of 2024. Listed firms in the financial sector generated net profits of $13.3bn and accounted for 42.3% of the total earnings of publicly-listed firms in the first nine months of 2025. Energy companies followed with $6bn (19%), then telecommunication firms with $4.1bn (13%), industrials with $2.64bn (8.4%), utilities with $1.66bn (5.3%), real estate firms with $1.4bn (4.4%), basic materials companies with $1.1bn (3.5%), healthcare providers with $583.7m (1.9%), consumer discretionary companies with $467.4m (1.5%), and consumer staples firms with $216.6m (0.7%). In parallel, the cumulative net income of 62 companies listed on the Dubai Financial Market that published their financial results stood at AED79.8bn, or $21.7bn, in the first nine months of 2025, representing an increase of 14% from AED70bn or $19.1bn in the same period last year. Listed financial firms generated profits of $11.3bn, or 52.2% of net earnings in the first nine months of 2025, followed by real estate companies with $5.5bn or 25.3% of the total, utilities firms with $1.8bn (8.5%), industrials with $1.6bn (7.5%), telecommunications firms with $594.4m (2.7%), and consumer staples companies with $413m (1.9%).

Source: KAMCO, Byblos Research

OUTLOOK

WORLD

Real GDP growth rate projected at 2.9% in 2026, risks tilted to the downside

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) projected the global real GDP growth rate to decelerate from 3.2% in 2025 to 2.9% in 2026 and 3.1% in 2027. It attributed the slowdown in global economic activity next year to the fading effects of front-loaded demand and to the rise in effective tariff rates on imports to the U.S. and China, which will increase the cost of doing business and the prices of final goods, and will weaken investment and trade growth. It added that elevated geopolitical risks and policy uncertainties will continue to weigh on domestic demand in many economies. But it anticipated global growth to recover through 2026 due to the fading impact of higher tariff rates, favorable financial conditions, supportive macroeconomic policies and lower inflation rates, with emerging-market economies in Asia accounting for the majority of global growth. Also, it forecast the real GDP growth rate in the OECD and the U.S. at 1.7% each, in the Euro Area at 1.2%, and in the Group of 20 economies at 2.9% in 2026. Moreover, it projected the real GDP growth rate in the Group of 20 economies at 2.9%, in the OECD at 1.8%, in the U.S. at 1.9%, and in the Euro Area at 1.5% in 2027.

In addition, it projected the average inflation rate in OECD economies to regress from 4.2% in 2025 to 3.5% in 2026 and to decrease from 3.4% in 2025 to 2.8% in 2026 in the Group of 20 economies, despite higher trade costs and some upward pressure on inflation in many countries. It said that agreements that would reverse the increase in trade barriers would provide additional support to growth and reduce inflationary pressures. Further, it anticipated labor markets to continue to ease in the near term, which will put additional downward pressure on labor costs and inflation, and forecast the unemployment rate in OECD economies at 5% in 2025 and 2026, and at 4.9% in 2027.

Further, it considered that risks to the global outlook are tilted to the downside and include further changes in trade policies that could significantly impact global economic activity, high inflation rates that may prompt more restrictive monetary policy, and rising financial market risks. But it noted that upside risks to the outlook include a lasting de-escalation of conflicts in Europe and the Middle East that would reduce geopolitical uncertainties and energy prices, as well as positive supply shocks that would boost potential output growth.
Source: OECD

SAUDI ARABIA

Non-hydrocarbon sector growth projected to average 4.7% in 2025-26 period

Jadwa Investment projected Saudi Arabia's real GDP growth rate to accelerate from 2.7% in 2024 to 4.3% in 2025 and 4.8% in 2026. It forecast the real hydrocarbon sector's GDP to shift from a contraction of 4.4% in 2024 to growth rates of 6% this year and 7% in 2026 amid higher oil output and the expected start of operations in the Jafurah gas field in late 2025. Also, it expected the real non-hydrocarbon sector's GDP to grow by 4.6% in 2025 and by 4.8% in 2026, driven by lending growth and by a pick-up in activity in the tourism, transport, logistics, construction, and manufacturing sectors.

In addition, it forecast the fiscal deficit to widen from 2.5% of GDP in 2024 to 5.2% of GDP in 2025 due to lower oil receipts and unchanged spending, and projected it to narrow to 4.5% of GDP in 2026, driven by a small decrease in public expenditures and an increase in revenues mainly from non-oil sectors. Further, it expected the public debt level to rise from 30.7% of GDP at end-2025 to 33.8% of GDP by end-2026, as the government finances it fiscal deficits through borrowing. It considered that the government will maintain sizeable liquidity buffers in the near term through its deposits at the Saudi Central Bank.

In parallel, it projected the current account deficit to widen from 1.3% of GDP in 2024 to 3.9% of GDP in 2025 and 4.2% of GDP in 2026, due to lower oil export receipts and to rising imports. It said that inflows from external debt issuance, a decline in deposits held abroad, and smaller portfolio outflows are financing the deficit.Also, it forecast official foreign currency reserves to reach $432bn at end-2025 and $425bn at end-2026.
Source: Jadwa Investment

ANGOLA

Lower oil prices are key risk to economic and financial outlook

JPMorgan Chase & Co. projected Angola's real GDP growth rate at 3% in 2026 compared to the authorities forecast of 4.2%, due to aging oil fields and insufficient investments in new oil projects. Further, it forecast the inflation rate to decrease from 20.4% in 2025 to 15% in 2026, supported by the disinflation path due to improved harvests and to the stability of the exchange rate. It considered that the Banco Nacional de Angola (BNA) will try to limit the currency's depreciation and will continue its monetary policy easing cycle. As such, it anticipated the BNA to reduce its policy rate by 200 basis points to 16% in 2026.

In addition, it projected the fiscal deficit to narrow from 3.4% of GDP in 2025 to 3.1% of GDP in 2026 in case the authorities reduce fuel subsidies by 40% next year, but it noted that pre-elections spending could widen the deficit. Also, it expected the consolidated public debt to regress from 52% of GDP at end-2025 to 50% of GDP in 2026 and anticipated it to continue to decline in the near term. But it considered that the government debt remains sensitive to currency fluctuations given the high stock of foreign currency debt.

In parallel, it expected the current account balance to shift from a surplus of 1.2% of GDP in 2025 to a deficit of 1.9% of GDP in 2026, constituting the first deficit since 2017, as it forecast global oil prices to average $58 per barrel (p/b) in 2026 and Angola's breakeven oil price at $64.6 p/b in 2026. Also, it did not expect oil production to rise meaningfully in the next few years, which will put additional strain on the external accounts and on foreign currency reserves. It said that the economy remains reliant on the oil sector, which accounts for 95% of exports, 20% of GDP, and nearly 50% of government revenues. It forecast Angola's external financing gap at $500m in 2026 with foreign currency reserves decreasing from $15.5bn at end-2025 to US$15bn at end-2026 if its current oil prices and production projections materialize. It noted that the authorities may tap the Eurobonds market again if market conditions are favorable, and estimated that the government will be able to secure multilateral funding from the World Bank and commercial sources.
Source: JPMorgan Chase & Co.

KUWAIT

Sovereign ratings upgraded on fiscal reforms momentum

S&P Global Ratings upgraded Kuwait's short- and long-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings from 'A-1' and 'A+' to 'A-1+' and 'AA-', respectively. It attributed the upgrade to the country's fiscal reform momentum, sizable net external and government asset positions, and reduced fiscal funding constraints amid the enactment of the financing and liquidity law that will diversify the government's funding profile and reduce uncertainties about financing arrangements. It said that the 'stable' outlook reflects the agency's expectation that the country's public and external balance sheets will remain very strong, backed by a significant stock of public financial assets, which will mitigate risks related to Kuwait's economic reliance on the hydrocarbon sector, potential oil price volatility, and sizable fiscal spending. It projected the fiscal deficit to regress from 9.1% of GDP in 2026, to 6.5% of GDP in 2028, and expected the gross public debt to rise from 12.8% in 2024 to 24.1% of GDP in 2028. Also, it forecast the country's gross external financing needs at 114.6% of current account receipts and usable reserves in 2026 and at 116% and 116.8% of such receipts in 2027 and 2028, respectively. In parallel, it noted that it could upgrade the ratings in the next two years if reforms support the development of deep domestic capital markets and promote economic diversification and growth. But it said that it could downgrade the ratings if broader reform efforts are slower than expected, which would weaken fiscal metrics or the growth outlook in the medium term.

Source: S&P Global Ratings

BAHRAIN

Sovereign ratings downgraded on rising debt level and fiscal pressures

S&P Global Ratings downgraded Bahrain's long-term foreign currency issuer credit rating from 'B+' to 'B', which is five notches below investment grade, and affirmed the long-term local currency issuer credit rating at 'B'. Further, it downgraded the Country's Transfer & Convertibility assessment from 'BB-' to 'B+', and revised the outlook on the long-term foreign currency ratings from 'negative' to 'stable'. It attributed the downgrade to the risks stemming from the increase of the already elevated public debt level, due to persistent fiscal pressures and wide fiscal deficits, as well as to the low level of foreign currency reserves relative to the high external financing needs. It said that the 'stable' outlook reflects the support from other Gulf Cooperation Council sovereigns, which helps offset ongoing fiscal and external pressures. It projected the gross public debt level to rise from 125.7% of GDP in 2025 to 138.5% of GDP in 2028, due to wide fiscal deficits and softer oil market dynamics. It added that Bahrain's gross external financing needs are among the highest among rated sovereigns and forecast them at 380.8% of current account receipts and usable reserves in 2026 and at 391.5% and 403.8% of such receipts and reserves in 2027 and 2028, respectively. Also, it stated that it could upgrade the ratings if the government implements reforms that would improve its fiscal and external position and would result in a significant decline in the public debt level and debt servicing costs. But it said that it may downgrade the ratings if external or fiscal pressures increase.

Source: S&P Global Ratings

IRAQ

Sovereign ratings affirmed, outlook 'stable'

Fitch Ratings affirmed Iraq's short- and long-term foreign and local currency issuer default ratings (IDRs) at 'B' and 'B-', respectively, and maintained the 'stable' outlook on the long-term IDRs. It indicated that the ratings are supported by the country's elevated foreign currency reserves, Iraq's favorable government debt profile, and low interest payments on the government's external debt. But it noted that the ratings are constrained by the country's high dependence on commodities, elevated political risks, fiscal rigidities, and weak governance. In addition, it expected Iraq's oil production to increase to 4.3 million barrels per day in the 2025-27 period, as the authorities gradually phase out production cuts under the OPEC+ decision. Also, it forecast the fiscal deficit at 9.7% of GDP in 2025 and to average 8.8% of GDP in the 2026-27 period, as it did not expect the increase in oil production to offset the decline in global oil prices. Further, it projected the government debt to increase from 54.1% of GDP at end-2025 to 62.5% of GDP in 2027 compared with the median of 52.9% of GDP of 'B'-rated sovereigns in the 2025-27 period. Also, it forecast official foreign-currency reserves to decline from 11.4 months of current external payments at end-2024 to 10.6 months in the near term, driven by reduced oil export receipts, but it noted that they will be partly offset by a decline in imports. In parallel, the agency said that it could downgrade the ratings if wider fiscal deficits persist and if the government debt level increases, and/or if the country's security worsens, which could affect oil production and exports. But it noted that it could upgrade the ratings if the government's debt level declines and its foreign assets increase, and/or in case non-oil economic activity expands.

Source: Fitch Ratings

BANGLADESH

Economy facing macro-financial challenges

The International Monetary Fund projected Bangladesh's real GDP growth rate to accelerate from 3.7% in the fiscal year that ended in June 2025 to 5% in FY2025/26 and FY2026/27, in case the authorities implement the necessary policy actions and reforms. But it said that the economy continues to face mounting macro-financial challenges from weak tax revenues, the financial sector's vulnerabilities, and elevated inflation rates. As such, it urged the authorities to address fiscal and financial challenges to restore strong and inclusive growth. It noted that the slow decline in inflation justifies maintaining tight monetary conditions until the inflation rate returns to Bangladesh Bank's target range of 5% to 6%, and forecast the inflation rate to regress from 8.8% in FY2025/26 to 5.5% in FY2026/27. Also, it said that improving public financial and investment management will support the reallocation of resources to priority sectors and provide the government with fiscal space to strengthen the financial sector. Further, it stressed the need to implement additional structural reforms to unlock the country's economic potential, and called on the government to continue its effort to strengthen anti-corruption measures and improve the anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism framework. But it noted that downside risks to the outlook include delayed policy action in addressing fiscal and banking sector challenges, which could undermine growth, raise inflation, and increase risks to macro-financial stability.

Source: International Monetary Fund

BANKING

MENA

Total assets of Arab banking sector up 6.7% to $5.3 trillion at end-June 2025

Figures compiled by the Union of Arab Banks show that the total assets of the 21 Arab banking sectors reached $5.3 trillion (tn) at the end of June 2025, compared to $4.97tn at end-2024 and $4.57tn at end-2023. The aggregate assets of the UAE banks stood at $1.35tn and accounted for 25.5% of the total at end-June 2025, followed by banks in Saudi Arabia with $1.28tn (24.2%), in Qatar with $583.8bn (11%), in Egypt with $481.4bn (9.1%), and in Kuwait with $318bn (6%). Also, the aggregate deposits of the 21 Arab banking sectors stood at $3.16tn at the end of June 2025 relative to $3tn at end-2024 and $2.78tn at end-2023. The deposits of UAE banks reached $833.3bn and accounted for 26.4% of the total, followed by banks in Saudi Arabia with $767bn (24.3%), in Egypt with $298.3bn (9.4%), in Qatar with $289.2bn (9.1%), and in Kuwait with $167.8bn (5.3%). Further, the loans and credits of the 21 Arab banking sectors totaled $3.1tn at the end of June 2025 relative to $2.94tn at end-2024 and $2.77tn at end-2023. The aggregate loans and credits of the Saudi banks stood at $1.04tn and accounted for 34% of the total at end-June 2025, followed by banks in the UAE with $515.8bn (16.7%), in Qatar with $364.7bn (11.8%), in Egypt with $329.3bn (10.7%), and in Morocco with $165.7bn (5.4%). Also, the capital accounts of the 21 Arab banking sectors totaled $588.4bn at the end of June 2025 relative to $561.7bn at end-2024 and $520.3bn at end-2023. The capital accounts of the Saudi banks stood at $164bn and accounted for 28% of the total at end-June 2025, followed by banks in the UAE with $148.6bn (25.3%), in Qatar with $58.5bn (10%), and in Kuwait with $56bn (9.5%).

Source: Union of Arab Banks

GCC

Banks' financial performance to remain stable

S&P Global Ratings expected the financial profiles of banks in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to remain stable in 2026, supported by broadly steady profitability, supportive asset quality, and solid capitalization. But it said that the effects of future geopolitical shocks on banks will depend on the impact of such shocks on oil export routes, financial flows and tourism, as well as on consumer and investor confidence. Further, it noted that the GCC banks' reliance on external funding is increasing, but it expected capital inflows to the region to be strong in the next 12 months. It stated that all banking systems in the GCC, except for Qatar, could withstand outflows by using their own foreign assets. In addition, it said that the combination of a supportive economic environment, write-offs of non-performing loans (NPLs), and the recoveries of previous NPLs have helped GCC banks report strong asset quality indicators, with the NPLs ratio of the top 45 banks at 2.7% and the provision coverage ratio at 155.6% at end-June 2025. Also, it projected the cost of risk at banks to rise from 46 basis points (bps) in the first half of 2025 to between 50 bps and 60 bps in 2026. Further, it said that the GCC banks' unweighted average Tier One Capital ratio of 17% at end-June 2025 is elevated by international standards. But it anticipated the quality of their capital to continue to weaken in the near term, as shareholders and investors are less willing to inject core capital into banks and are prioritizing receiving a continuous and predefined income stream from hybrid instruments.

Source: S&P Global Ratings

ALGERIA

Algiers makes progress on AML/CFT action plan

In its October 2025 update, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global standard-setting body for anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), indicated that Algeria made a high-level political commitment in October 2024 to work with the FATF and its regional body MENAFATF to strengthen the effectiveness of its AML/CFT regime. It said that Algeria has made progress on several recommended actions, including improving risk-based supervision through the adoption of new procedures, risk assessments, supervision manuals and guidelines; developing a legal framework for sanctions for breaches of basic and beneficial ownership requirements for legal persons; implementing an effective legal and institutional framework for targeted financial sanctions for terrorism financing; and carrying out a terrorism financing risk assessment of the non-profit sector. Further, it pointed out that the authorities will continue to collaborate with the FATF to implement their action plan by strengthening risk-based supervision, especially for higher risk sectors, including through conducting inspections and applying effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions; as well as by developing an effective framework for basic and beneficial ownership information and enhancing the regime for suspicious transaction reports. Also, it urged the authorities to implement a risk-based approach to supervise non-profit organizations by undertaking outreach to the sector, without disrupting or discouraging legitimate activity. The FATF placed Algeria on its list of "jurisdictions under increased monitoring" in October 2024 and maintained it on the list in its reviews of February, June and October 2025.

Source: Financial Action Task Force

TÜRKIYE

Industry risk decreasing on lower competitive pressures

S&P Global Ratings upgraded Türkiye's Banking Industry Country Risk Assessment (BICRA) from 'Group 9' to 'Group 8'. It also upgraded the country's industry risk score from '9' to '8' and maintained its economic risk score at '8'. The BICRA framework evaluates banking systems based on economic and industry risks facing the sector, with 'Group 10' consisting of the riskiest banking sectors. Other countries in 'Group 8' consist of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Honduras, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. The agency indicated that Türkiye's economic risk score reflects its "very high risks" in its economic resilience and credit risks in the economy, as well as "high risks" in its economic imbalances. It projected the sector's non-performing loans ratio to increase from 1.8% as end-2024 to 2.6% by end-2025 and 3.1% at end-2026, and for the banks' credit losses to rise from 2% of total loans at end-2024 to 2.2% in the 2025-26 period. It attributed the deterioration in asset quality to tightening financing conditions, slowing economic activity, and a further depreciation of the Turkish Lira. In parallel, S&P noted that the industry score reflects the country's "very high risks" in its system-wide funding and in its institutional framework and to the relative improvement in its competitive dynamics from "very high risks" to "high risks". It added that the trend for the economic and industry risks is 'stable'.

Source: S&P Global Ratings

Oil prices to average $63 p/b in fourth quarter of 2025

The prices of ICE Brent Crude oil front-month future contracts averaged $68.8 per barrel (p/b) in the first 11 months of 2025, constituting a decrease of 14.5% from $80.5 p/b in the same period of 2024, driven by elevated oil production that outpaced demand growth, the unwinding of oil output by the OPEC+ coalition, resilient Russian exports despite sanctions, and bearish market sentiment. Brent prices averaged $63.7 p/b in November 2025, down by 0.5% from $64 p/b in October 2025 and constituting the second consecutive month of oil price decline. In parallel, Goldman Sachs expected global oil prices to face downward pressure, particularly the prices of refined products, if Western countries lift sanctions on Russia's oil sector, although significant uncertainties persist about the specifics of a potential agreement between Russia and Ukraine as well as its likelihood of materializing. As such, it expected a potential peace deal between Russia and Ukraine to lower global oil prices by $4 p/b to $5 p/b, as Russian production gradually recovers and oil inventories rise in OECD markets if shipments at sea decline. But it said that the immediate downside risk to crude prices from a potential agreement is limited, given that investors have partially incorporated the possibility of a deal. It noted that Russia's oil output would also take time to recover, even if the West lifts all of its sanctions on Russia and drone attacks on Russian refineries cease. However, it expected a stronger immediate decline in refined product prices from a potential deal, given that Russia's refined products exports have declined by 0.9 million barrels per day since March 2022 and that refined products carry a higher geopolitical risk premium than crude oil, while its crude exports have remained nearly flat. In parallel, it projected Brent crude oil prices to average $63 p/b in the fourth quarter of the year and $68 p/b in full year 2025.

Source: Goldman Sachs, LSEG Workspace, Byblos Research

ME&A's oil demand to increase by 2.3% in 2025

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries projected the consumption of crude oil in the Middle East & Africa to average 13.79 million barrels per day (b/d) in 2025, which would constitute an increase of 2.3% from 13.48 million b/d in 2024. The region's demand for oil would represent 23.3% of consumption in non-OECD countries and 13.1% of global consumption in 2025.

Source: OPEC

Global steel output up 1.1% in October 2025

Global steel production reached 143.3 million tons in October 2025, constituting an increase of 1.1% from 141.8 million tons in September 2025 and a decrease of 5.8% from 152.1 million tons October 2024. Production in China totaled 72 million tons and accounted for 50.2% of global steel output in October 2025, followed by output in India with 13.6 million tons (9.5%), the U.S. with seven million tons (5%), Japan with 6.9 million tons (4.8%), and Russia with 5.3 million tons (3.7%).

Source: World Steel Association, Byblos Research

Kuwait's crude oil production up 1% in September 2025

Crude oil production in Kuwait totaled 2.52 million barrels per day (b/d) in September 2025, constituting an increase of 1.1% from 2.49 million b/d in August 2025. Crude oil exports stood at 2.42 million b/d in September 2025, down by 0.5% from 2.44 million b/d in August 2025 and by 0.3% from 2.43 million b/d in September 2024.

Source: JODI, Byblos Research

Base Metals: Nickel prices to average $15,250 per ton in fourth quarter of 2025

The LME cash price of nickel averaged $15,188.4 per ton in the first 11 months of 2025, constituting a decrease of 10.4% from an average of $16,949.7 a ton in the same period of 2024, due to persistent excessive supply of the metal by nickel producers in China and Indonesia, weak demand from the battery sector, as well as to global economic uncertainties. Also, Nickel prices dropped by 31.7% from a high of $21,369 a ton on August 3, 2023 to $14,605.2 per ton on December 2, 2025 due to a surge in output from Indonesia and China, slower-than-expected growth in demand from the electric vehicle battery sector, and weaker stainless steel consumption. In parallel, the latest available figures released by the International Nickel Study Group projected the global primary supply of nickel at 3.74 million tons in 2025, which would constitute an increase of 8% from 3.53 million tons in 2024 and relative to 3.37 million tons in 2023, mainly driven by additional nickel output in China. Also, it forecast global demand for primary nickel at 3.6 million tons in 2025, which would represent an increase of 5.3% from 3.419 million tons in 2024, compared to 3.19 million tons in 2023. As such, it projected the global nickel market to post a surplus of 209,000 tons in 2025, up by 86.6% from a surplus of 112,000 tons in 2024, and compared to 176,000 tons in 2023. Further, Goldman Sachs projected nickel prices to average $15,250 per ton in the fourth quarter of 2025 and $15,400 a ton in full year 2025.

Source: International Nickel Study Group, Goldman Sachs, LSEG Workspace, Byblos Research

Precious Metals: Palladium prices to average $1,164 per ounce in fourth quarter of 2025

Palladium prices averaged $1,109.7 per troy ounce in the first 11 months of 2025, constituting an increase of 12.5% from an average of $986.4 an ounce in the same period of 2024. The rise in palladium prices has been mainly driven by strong demand from the automotive industry, supply constraints from major producers, mainly Russia and South Africa, as well as geopolitical risks. Also, palladium prices reached $1,575 an ounce on October 16, 2025, their highest level since May 11, 2023 when they stood at $1,607 an ounce. The surge in prices reflects robust investor demand for safe-haven assets amid geopolitical tensions, tight inventories of palladium at the London Metal Exchange (LME), and ongoing uncertainty about U.S. trade policy. In parallel, Goldman Sachs expected volatility in palladium prices to persist until U.S. trade policy becomes clearer. It anticipated the fluctuation of palladium prices to moderate, once U.S.-held inventories return to the market and liquidity in the LME fully normalizes. Further, it said that the supply of palladium is highly concentrated in South Africa and Russia that produce 46% and 39% of global output, respectively, which poses significant disruption risks. It noted that the U.S. may impose modest duties on Russian palladium, as a full ban by the U.S. would increase reliance on South Africa where mining is vulnerable to power and labor disruptions. Also, it indicated that this year's increase in palladium prices has pushed many industrial buyers, mainly automakers, to delay purchases and turn to the leasing of palladium in expectations of lower prices. But it said that if investors continue to treat palladium as a substitute for gold, leasing could shift towards direct buying, which would pose upward pressure on palladium prices in the near term. Moreover, S&P Global Market Intelligence forecast palladium prices to average $1,164 per ounce in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Source: Goldman Sachs, S&P Global Market Intelligence, LSEG Workspace, Byblos Research

COUNTRY RISK METRICS

Countries	LT Foreign currency rating: S&P	Moody's	Fitch	CI	General gvt. balance/ GDP (%)	Gross Public debt (% of GDP)	Usable Reserves / CAPs* (months)	Short-Term External Debt by Rem. Mat./ CARs	Gvt. Interest Exp./ Rev. (%)	Gross Ext. Fin. needs / (CAR + Use. Res.) (%)	Current Account Balance / GDP (%)	Net FDI / GDP (%)
Africa												
Algeria	- -	- -	- -	- -	-3.7	56.9	-	-	-	-	-3.2	0.4
Angola	B- Stable	B3 Stable	B- Stable	- -	-1.0	62.06	4.7	52.2	25.9	105.8	2.7	-2.7
Egypt	B Stable	Caa1 Positive	B Stable	B Stable	-4.6	73.3	2.7	97.3	14.6	179.1	-18.5	16.4
Ethiopia	SD -	Caa3 Stable	CCC- -	 -	-2.5	22.0	0.5	32.1	5.9	158.7	-3.1	1.8
Ghana	B Stable	Ca Positive	B- Stable	- -	-3.2	66.1	0.7	54.3	22.7	139.7	3.0	2.0
Côte d'Ivoire	BB Stable	Ba2 Stable	BB- Stable	- -	-4.2	57.0	3.6	45.0	14.6	119.9	-4.6	2.3
Libya	- -	- -	- -	- -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dem Rep Congo	B- Stable	B3 Stable	- -	- -	-0.5	14.5	1.2	5.9	2.2	103.8	-5.4	4.2
Morocco	BBB- Stable	Ba1 Stable	BB+ Stable	- -	-4.1	65.8	4.9	30.4	7.3	94.0	-1.4	0.5
Nigeria	B- Positive	Caa1 Positive	B Stable	- -	-5.6	41.2	4.1	71.2	28.9	126.8	0.6	0.1
Sudan	- -	- -	- -	- -	-5.0	91.0	-	-	-	-	-5.0	0.2
Tunisia	- -	Caa1 Stable	B- Stable	- -	-5.6	88.7	-	-	26.1	-	-2.7	-1.1
Burkina Faso	CCC+ Stable	- -	- -	- -	-5.8	58.0	1.2	59.0	11.4	156.8	-5.4	0.5
Rwanda	B+ Stable	B2 Stable	B+ Stable	- -	-4.6	69.5	3.5	19.8	9.5	111.5	-11.7	3.7
Middle East												
Bahrain	B Stable	B2 Stable	B+ Stable	B+ Negative	-4.9	133.7	-3.5	138.2	29.7	331.1	2.1	1.0
Iran	- -	- -	- -	- -	-4.2	26.1	-	-	-	-	3.5	-
Iraq	B- Stable	Caa1 Stable	B- Stable	- -	-4.5	45.6	15.3	3.2	3.1	42.6	5.6	-1.4
Jordan	BB- Stable	Ba3 Stable	BB- Stable	BB- Stable	-1.8	92.6	1.9	68.5	12	150.3	-4.4	1.6
Kuwait	AA- Stable	A1 Stable	AA- Stable	A+ Stable	-3.9	5.2	2.2	45.3	0.4	107.9	15.4	-4.8
Lebanon	SD -	C -	RD** -	- -	0.0	213.0	8.8	181.1	9.0	160.6	-20.1	2.8
Oman	BBB- Stable	Baa3 Stable	BB+ Stable	BBB- Positive	-7.3	51.7	4.4	26.0	6.5	101.2	-8.3	2.1
Qatar	AA Stable	Aa2 Stable	AA Stable	AA Stable	4.0	47.7	2.2	115.4	5.0	168.0	16.7	-0.2
Saudi Arabia	A+ Stable	A1 Positive	A+ Stable	AA- Stable	-2.8	24.6	10.3	25.3	3.5	67.7	-0.2	0.5
Syria	- -	- -	- -	- -	-	49.0	-	-	-	-	-15.5	-
UAE	AA Stable	Aa2 Stable	AA- Stable	AA- Stable	5.5	29.9	-	-	4.3	-	6.8	-2.0
Yemen	- -	- -	- -	- -	-2.7	50.7	-	-	-	-	-19.2	-2.3

COUNTRY RISK METRICS

Countries	LT Foreign currency rating S&P	Moody's	Fitch	CI	General gvt. balance/ GDP (%)	Gross Public debt (% of GDP)	Usable Reserves / CAPs* (months)	Short-Term External Debt by Rem. Mat./ CARs	Gvt. Interest Exp./ Rev. (%)	Gross Ext. Fin. needs / (CAR + Use. Res.) (%)	Current Account Balance / GDP (%)	Net FDI / GDP (%)
Asia												
Armenia	BB- Stable	Ba3 Stable	BB- Stable	B+ Positive	-4.6	49.8	2.0	29.6	11.5	114.7	-3.1	2.2
China	A+ Stable	A1 Negative	A+ Stable	- -	-3.0	65.2	10.9	20.6	5.8	60.9	2.3	0.7
India	BBB- Stable	Baa3 Stable	BBB- Stable	- -	-7.8	84.0	7.3	29.8	25.2	82.2	-1.3	1.0
Kazakhstan	BBB- Stable	Baa2 Positive	BBB Stable	- -	-3.1	26.4	4.1	29.4	8.1	100.4	-2.8	2.2
Pakistan	B- Stable	Caa1 Stable	B- Stable	- -	-7.5	71.3	0.7	34.9	55.9	133.4	-1.3	0.4
Bangladesh	B+ Stable	B2 Negative	B+ Stable	- -	-4.8	32.1	3.8	29.0	29.0	102.8	-1.5	0.4
Central & Eastern Europe												
Bulgaria	BBB Positive	Baa1 Stable	BBB Positive	- -	-2.5	24.5	2.0	19.5	1.5	102.8	-0.5	2.0
Romania	BBB- Stable	Baa3 Stable	BBB- Stable	- -	-7.3	51.7	4.4	25.9	6.5	101.2	-8.3	2.1
Russia	- -	- -	- -	- -	-	18.2	18.0	23.6	4.4	45.0	12.1	-0.7
Türkiye	BB- Stable	B03 Stable	BB- Stable	BB- Stable	-5.1	27.0	1.4	63.6	10.8	149.0	-1.2	0.4
Ukraine	CC Negative	Ca Stable	CC -	- -	-17.0	91.6	4.6	40.7	10.1	108.	-6.6	1.4

**Current account payments*

***Fitch withdrew the ratings of Lebanon on July 23, 2024*

Source: S&P Global Ratings, Fitch Ratings, Moody's Ratings, CI Ratings, Byblos Research - The above figures are projections for 2025

SELECTED POLICY RATES

	Benchmark rate	Current (%)	Last meeting Date	Action	Next meeting
USA	Fed Funds Target Rate	4.00	29-Oct-25	Cut 25bps	10-Dec-25
Eurozone	Refi Rate	2.15	30-Oct-25	No change	18-Dec-25
UK	Bank Rate	4.00	06-Nov-25	No change	18-Dec-25
Japan	O/N Call Rate	0.50	30-Oct-25	No change	19-Dec-25
Australia	Cash Rate	3.60	04-Nov-25	No change	09-Dec-25
New Zealand	Cash Rate	2.25	26-Nov-25	Cut 25bps	18-Feb-26
Switzerland	SNB Policy Rate	0.00	25-Sep-25	No change	11-Dec-25
Canada	Overnight rate	2.25	29-Oct-25	Cut 25bps	10-Dec-25
Emerging Markets					
China	One-year Loan Prime Rate	3.00	20-Nov-25	No change	20-Dec-25
Hong Kong	Base Rate	4.25	30-Oct-25	Cut 25bps	11-Dec-25
Taiwan	Discount Rate	2.00	18-Sep-25	No change	18-Dec-25
South Korea	Base Rate	2.50	27-Nov-25	No change	N/A
Malaysia	O/N Policy Rate	2.75	06-Nov-25	No change	N/A
Thailand	1D Repo	1.50	08-Oct-25	No change	17-Dec-25
India	Repo Rate	5.50	01-Oct-25	No change	05-Dec-25
UAE	Base Rate	3.90	29-Oct-25	Cut 25bps	10-Dec-25
Saudi Arabia	Repo Rate	4.50	29-Oct-25	Cut 25bps	10-Dec-25
Egypt	Overnight Deposit	21.00	20-Nov-25	No change	25-Dec-25
Jordan	CBJ Main Rate	6.00	02-Nov-25	Cut 50bps	N/A
Türkiye	Repo Rate	39.5	23-Oct-25	Cut 100bps	N/A
South Africa	Repo Rate	6.75	20-Nov-25	Cut 25bps	N/A
Kenya	Central Bank Rate	9.25	07-Oct-25	Cut 25bps	09-Dec-25
Nigeria	Monetary Policy Rate	27.00	25-Nov-25	No change	N/A
Ghana	Prime Rate	18.00	26-Nov-25	Cut 350bps	28-Jan-26
Angola	Base Rate	18.50	18-Nov-25	Cut 50bps	14-Jan-25
Mexico	Target Rate	7.25	06-Nov-25	Cut 25bps	18-Dec-25
Brazil	Selic Rate	15.00	05-Nov-25	No change	N/A
Armenia	Refi Rate	6.75	04-Nov-25	No change	16-Dec-25
Romania	Policy Rate	6.50	12-Nov-25	No change	19-Jan-26
Bulgaria	Base Interest	1.80	03-Nov-25	Cut 1bp	01-Jan-25
Kazakhstan	Repo Rate	18.00	28-Nov-25	No change	N/A
Ukraine	Discount Rate	15.50	23-Oct-25	No change	11-Dec-25
Russia	Refi Rate	16.50	24-Oct-25	Cut 100bps	19-Dec-25

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