








U Capital Morning Brief

11 March 2018

GCC Market Indices	Current Close	Previous Close	Change	D/D	MTD	YTD
	Index	Index	Point	%	%	%
U Capital Oman 20 Index	930.79	931.58	-0.79	-0.08%	-2.71%	-4.46%
U Capital GCC 50 Index	1,199.23	1,184.53	14.70	1.24%	1.36%	4.77%
U Capital MENA 200 Index	1,031.24	1,016.08	15.16	1.49%	1.29%	3.63%
MSCI GCC Countries Index	493.93	494.00	-0.07	-0.01%	0.66%	2.95%
 Muscat Securities Market	4,929.80	4,928.10	1.70	0.03%	-1.47%	-3.32%
 Saudi Stock Exchange	7,562.11	7,453.17	108.94	1.46%	1.93%	4.65%
 Kuwait Stock Exchange	6,778.18	6,808.45	(30.27)	-0.44%	0.08%	5.78%
 Qatar Exchange	8,308.34	8,371.11	(62.77)	-0.75%	-3.99%	-2.52%
 Bahrain Stock Exchange	1,370.25	1,366.29	3.96	0.29%	0.03%	2.89%
 Dubai Financial Market	3,157.45	3,181.96	(24.51)	-0.77%	-2.67%	-6.31%
 Abu Dhabi Sec. Exchange	4,527.10	4,519.58	7.52	0.17%	-1.53%	2.93%

Source: Bloomberg

World Markets*	Country	Value	Change	D/D	Commodity Prices*	Price	Change	D/D
				%		USD	USD	%
Europe					Brent Crude (per bbl) <i>Updated</i>	65.49	1.88	2.96
FTSE 100	United Kingdom	7,224.5	21.27	0.30	WTI Crude (per bbl) <i>Updated</i>	62.04	1.92	3.19
DAX	Germany	12,346.7	(8.89)	(0.07)	Oman Crude Oil (Last Closing)	62.49	1.88	3.10
CAC 40	France	5,274.4	20.30	0.39				
United States					Gold 100 OZ (per oz)	1,323.30	1.33	0.10
DJIA	USA	25,335.7	440.53	1.77	Silver (per oz)	16.59	0.10	0.58
S&P 500	USA	2,786.6	47.60	1.74				
NASDAQ	USA	7,560.8	132.87	1.79	Platinum (per oz)	966.00	12.95	1.36
Asia Pacific					Copper, MT	6,962.00	129.00	1.89
NIKKEI 225	Japan	21,469.2	101.13	0.47	Aluminium, MT	2,120.00	14.00	0.66
HANG SENG	Hongkong	30,996.2	341.69	1.11	Lead, MT	2,376.00	39.00	1.67
Selected Middle East					Zinc, MT	3,277.00	47.00	1.46
Tunis Se Index	Tunis	6,809.5	12.76	0.19	Nickel, MT	13,860.00	590.00	4.45
EGX 30 Index	Egypt	16,472.3	88.21	0.54				
Blom Stock Index	Lebanon	1,166.2	1.90	0.16				

Source: Bloomberg, U Capital- at 8:30AM Muscat time

Source: Bloomberg, U Capital- at 8:30AM Muscat time

Cross Rate for Major Currencies*

Currency	Code	USD/1 Unit	Units/1 USD
Euro	EUR	1.231	0.813
British Pound	GBP	1.385	0.722
Japanese Yen	JPY	0.009	106.820
Chinese Renminbi	CNH	0.158	6.331
Indian Rupee	INR	0.015	65.165
Russian Ruble	RUB	0.018	56.659
Canadian Dollar	CAD	0.781	1.281
Australian Dollar	AUD	0.784	1.274

Source: Bloomberg Note: all prices/indices are updated till 8:30 AM Muscat time. * markets are closed on Saturday and Sunday

OMAN ECONOMIC & CORPORATE NEWS

U Capital: Blue-chip stocks lead market decline

The Muscat stock market remained under pressure as some blue-chip stocks witnessed hefty trade and remained under pressure as well. Along with that, some companies went ex-dividend as well during the week. Trading values however picked up during the week while trading volumes declined. The MSM30 is currently at its eight-month low at 4929.80 and ended the week down by 1.64 per cent. All sub-indices ended the week with a negative performance led by the Services Index, which closed the week down by 2.04 per cent, followed by the Financial Index at 0.39 per cent and industrial Index at 0.39 per cent.

Source: [Oman Observer](#)

U Capital exec addresses MEA cement conference

U Capital Head of Research, Hettish Karmani, gave a presentation on the GCC Cement Sector at the Middle East & Africa 2018 Cement Conference (Cemtech), which was held in Dubai recently. Karmani has been addressing this prestigious annual conference, currently in its 13th year, since 2010. He spoke about the ever changing and challenging Gulf Cooperation Council cement sector and its outlook for the upcoming years.

Source: [Oman Observer](#)

Bank Muscat's \$500m bond issue oversubscribed

Bank Muscat, the flagship financial institution in Oman, has announced the successful pricing and closure of a five-year \$500 million bond issuance under its Euro Medium Term Note (EMTN) program. The deal, which evoked a strong response from regional and international investors, was oversubscribed more than two times and carried a coupon of 4.875 per cent. Commenting on the success of the transaction, Shaikh Khalid bin Mustahail Al Mashani, Chairman of Bank Muscat, said: "The overwhelming response to the Euro bond issuance by Bank Muscat endorses the credibility enjoyed by the flagship bank in Oman.

Source: [Times of Oman](#)

'New Muscat airport, fleet expansion to boost tourism and logistics sectors'

Oman is on the cusp of witnessing a dramatic change in the air transport industry with only days left for the new Muscat International Airport to open its doors to the world. The national carrier Oman Air too is stepping up investment in a new fleet of aircraft and new routes. A US\$1.8bn development at the new Muscat airport, which involves the construction of a 580,000sq m terminal, is set to open on March 20. While some 14mn people passed through the present airport last year, up 17 per cent on 2016, the project will initially boost annual passenger capacity to around 20mn.

Source: [Muscat Daily](#)

Oman's Oil Exports Decline 6% In January

Oman's total exports of crude oil and condensates fell 5.9 per cent to 25.06mn barrels in January this year compared with total exports of 26.65mn barrels in January 2017, according to the data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Average price of Oman crude rose 36.6 per cent in January 2018 to reach to US\$60.8 per barrel compared with US\$44.5 per barrel in January of the previous year. The sultanate's production of crude oil and condensate in January stood at 29.97mn barrels, including 26.81mn barrels of crude oil and 3.16mn barrels of condensate.

Source: [Muscat Daily](#)

Oman Inflation Rises to 0.5% In February

Oman's annual inflation in February increased to 0.49 per cent compared with the same month of the previous year, according to the consumer price index data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The inflation rate, however, decreased 0.05 per cent compared to January 2018 inflation. The rise in February inflation was mainly due to growth in prices of transport and education categories.

Source: [Muscat Daily](#)

Oman becomes world's largest gypsum exporter

Having toppled Thailand to clinch the crown as the world's largest natural gypsum exporter, the Sultanate has the potential to retain its dominant position as a global supplier of this hugely coveted commodity for at least another couple of decades, according to a key mining industry executive. Alawi Zawawi, Vice Chairman of USG Boral Zawawi Gypsum, a leading player in the export of natural gypsum, said that Oman has the potential to export cumulatively total more than 300 million tons over the next 15 years (2018-2032), going by current trends.

Source: [Oman Observer](#)

NATIONAL FINANCE: Proposed merger with Oman ORIX Leasing Company SAOG

The Company is desirous of making the following disclosure to its shareholders: Further to the extraordinary general meeting held on December 14, 2017, the Company would like to inform its shareholders that based on the audited accounts for the financial year ended December 31, 2017 of the Company and Oman ORIX Leasing CO. SAOG (OOLC), it has determined the swap ratio by which the Company will issue new shares to shareholders of OOLC and the merger consideration to be paid to the shareholder of OOLC opting for a cash payment as under:

- i) Cash Consideration: For each share of OOLC, its shareholders will receive RO 0.190 per share.
- ii) Swap Ratio: For each share of OOLC, its shareholders will receive 0.9029 share of the Company.

The Company proposes to pay the above consideration and issue the new shares by March 21, 2018 through Muscat Clearing and Depository SAOC. The Company will intimate its shareholders once the merger has been completed and the merger decision issued by the regulator.

Source: **MSM**

UNITED FINANCE: Revision of FY17 Profit

The Board met on 8th March 2018 to consider the revised financials (draft) which has been received from the Auditors. The Board reviewed and approved the revised financials reflecting a net profit of RO. 1,022,851/- for submission to regulatory authorities. Considering the revised financials, the Board withdrew the recommended proposal for declaration of dividend for the financial year 2017. Taking into account the current circumstances of the Company, the Board decided to withdraw the proposal for reduction of share capital of the company. The Fraud Investigation Committee of the company submitted its report, wherein it stated that the Nizwa Branch Manager appears to have indulged in accounting manipulations and theft of company's loan records. The amount of the above irregularities is quantified at RO 1.35 million, which has been fully provided for in the financials for year 2017.

Source: **MSM**

NATIONAL GAS: Signing of MOU in KSA

National Gas Company SAOG, Oman and National Gas & Indust. Co. (GASCO), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) are entering into a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly explore the feasibility of expanding the LPG distribution, projects installations and trading of related equipment business in KSA. GASCO is currently the sole distributor for LPG in KSA having nationwide presence meeting LPG demand from household & industrial segment through their bottling facilities and bulk distribution arrangements across the Kingdom.

Source: **MSM**

AL JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS: New US steel trade tariff

On March 8th 2018, the US Government officially signed proclamations for a 25% tariff on imported steel pursuant to Section 232(b) of the Trade expansion Act 1962. The tariff apply to steel imported from all countries except Canada and Mexico, and gets into effect from March 23th 2018. Al Jazeera Steel is following the proceedings closely and working with their legal counsel for possible preventive measures. The company due to its diversified market spread, and product portfolio does not expect any significant impact in their International business volumes.

Source: **MSM**

GALFAR ENGINEERING AND CON.: Galfar Board of Directors' Resolutions

The Board decided to announce that as a result of lengthy discussions and through an agreement reached with a view to restructure the Board of Directors, 3 of the existing Board members – Sheikh Salim Abdullah Saeed Badr Al Rawas, Dr. Hatem Bakhiet Shanfari and Mr. Raiz Basheeruddin have stepped down and the Board has accepted the same. As a result there will be four vacant seats that would be filled in an election in the upcoming Annual General Meeting. The Board is proud to have had Directors of their calibre who have sincerely extended their untiring efforts to serve the Company throughout their membership terms which have lasted up to a decade and recorded a vote of thanks for their unflinching support and commitment to the Company.

Source: **MSM**

Note: Kindly see the proposed dividend announcements of MSM on the last page

MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC & CORPORATE NEWS

Banks and foreign flows boost Saudi market, Doha Bank weighs on Qatar

Saudi Arabia's bourse was boosted on Thursday by financial sector gains and foreign cash inflows from other regional markets in anticipation of a possible upgrade of the Saudi market emerging market status by index compilers FTSE and MSCI. Trading was mixed across the rest of the region. Egypt rose 0.5 percent on gains in the consumer sector while Dubai closed the week with a 0.8 percent loss. In Qatar, the index shed 0.8 percent, dragged down by Doha Bank which plunged 10 percent on Thursday as the stock went ex-dividend.

Source: **Reuters**

Saudi Arabia, UK ink 18 business deals

Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom have signed 18 business deals at the Saudi-UK CEO Forum during Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to London, Asharq Al Awsat newspaper reported. Saudi Aramco signed three educational, training and leadership agreements with Chatham House, Imperial College London, and the Wielding Institute. The oil giant also signed deals with Shell and Varel International Energy Services. Shell also signed an agreement in partnership with Saudi Arabia's SABIC and UK's Amec Foster Wheeler.

Source: **Argaam**

Al-Falih hints Aramco IPO could be postponed to 2019

Saudi energy minister Khalid Al-Falih hinted that the initial public offering (IPO) of Saudi Aramco could be delayed until 2019, Bloomberg reported. "Between December 31st and January 1st there is no value lost for the Kingdom," Al-Falih said in an interview in London. Al-Falih

also said the IPO would be “anchored” by a listing on Saudi stock exchange (Tadawul) and any international listing would be announced in due course, if at all.

Source: [Argaam](#)

Abu Dhabi inflation jumps with VAT introduction, but restrained by housing

Abu Dhabi consumer price inflation more than doubled in January as the UAE introduced a 5 percent value-added tax, with a weak real estate market preventing inflation from increasing even further, official data showed on Wednesday. Annual inflation in Abu Dhabi, the biggest emirate in the UAE, jumped to 4.7 percent — the highest level since 2015 — from 2.0 percent in December, Abu Dhabi’s Department of Economic Development said.

Source: [Arab News](#)

UAE healthcare firm NMC posts 38.2% profit jump, eyes more acquisitions

UAE healthcare provider NMC Health reported a 38.2 per cent rise in annual net profit on Wednesday and said acquisitions this year could top the \$641m it spent in 2017. London-listed NMC reported a net profit of \$209.2m on revenue of \$1.6bn, up 31.3 per cent. The Gulf’s healthcare sector is growing partly due to increasingly wealthy population that is becoming more susceptible to lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and obesity.

Source: [Gulf Business](#)

Emirates to meet investors ahead of possible Sukuk issuance

Emirates airline mandated local and international banks to arrange a global investor roadshow ahead of a possible Sukuk issuance, the carrier said on Wednesday. Emirates said it mandated Citi and Standard Chartered Bank as global coordinators and joint lead managers, alongside BNP Paribas, HSBC, J.P. Morgan, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank, First Abu Dhabi Bank, Emirates NBD Capital, and Noor Bank as joint lead managers. The roadshow to meet fixed income investors will commence on March 8.

Source: [Gulf News](#)

Air Arabia eyes 100-jet order this year after record 2017 profit

Middle East budget carrier Air Arabia AIRA.DU will add more destinations and could order around 100 narrow-body aircraft this year, thanks to rising demand in Egypt and other hubs, Chief Executive Adel Ali said on Wednesday. The expansion from the United Arab Emirates’ only publicly listed airline comes amid rising oil prices and after a year in which Air Arabia’s profit increased 30 percent to a record 662 million dirhams (\$180 million), as it flew more passengers and operated more routes.

Source: [Zawya](#)

Dar Al Arkan Hires Banks for Dollar Sukuk Offering

Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development mandates Alkhair Capital, Deutsche Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD Capital, Goldman Sachs, Nomura, Noor Bank and Standard Chartered as joint book runners to arrange fixed-income investor meetings in Europe, the U.A.E., Singapore and Hong Kong.

Source: [Bloomberg News Alert](#)

Saudi Dar Al Arkan Real Estate hires banks ahead of 5-year dollar sukuk deal

Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development Co has mandated banks to arrange fixed-income investor meetings from March 12 in Europe, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Hong Kong ahead of a planned U.S. dollar five-year sukuk offering, according to a document issued by one of the banks. If the deal goes ahead, Dar Al Arkan will be the first Saudi company to issue an international bond this year.

Source: [Zawya](#)

Dubai Metro's Route 2020 takes shape, 50% tunnel works complete

Mattar Al Tayer, Director General and Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA), announced the completion of 50 per cent of main tunneling works of the Route 2020 Project, which extends 3.2km at a varying depth from 12 to 36 metres. Al Tayer revealed that completion rate in the construction of stations ranges from four to 42 per cent. Al Tayer made this statement during an inspection tour of stations of the Route 2020 Project that spans 15km from Nakheel Harbour and Tower Station up to the site of Expo.

Source: [Zawya](#)

Here is how women will change Saudi auto market

A fifth of women population in Saudi Arabia is expected to drive by 2020, creating new opportunities for car manufacturers, insurance firms, investors and job seekers, according to a PwC report. Saudi Arabia’s female population is projected to reach 15 million in 2020, 20 percent of which are projected to drive based on their age and income qualification, the report said. “There would be dependencies such as necessary infrastructure and services to support female drivers; for example, women driving instructors, driving schools, licenses issuance, etc,” said Hala Kudwah, PwC Saudi Arabia Financial Services & Consulting Leader.

Source: [Argaam](#)

Saudi ultra-rich population to jump 18% in next 5 years: Knight Frank

Saudi Arabia's ultra-wealthy population is expected to increase 18 percent over the next five years, according to The Wealth Report by Knight Frank. The number of ultra-wealthy people (those with net assets of \$50 million or more) in the Kingdom rose 4 percent in 2017, reaching 1,540, it added. The Middle East remains one of the world's key wealth regions, ranking in the fourth position just after Europe in terms of wealth held by ultra-wealthy people. North America leads the chart. Separately, the number of ultra-wealthy individuals worldwide rose 10 percent in 2017, taking the global population to 129,730, with a combined worth of \$26.4 trillion.

Source: [Argaam](#)

Credit growth, interest rates to boost Saudi banks' profitability: Moody's

A gradual pickup in credit growth and the positive effect of higher interest rates are likely to support Saudi banks' profitability this year and offset continued provisioning efforts, Moody's Investors Service said in a report on Thursday. "With an improved return on assets of 2 percent for 2017, versus 1.9 percent in 2016, we expect Saudi banks' profitability to continue to outperform other GCC banking systems," the ratings agency said. Lenders in the Kingdom reported a 9 percent year-on-year (YoY) increase in net profits in 2017, compared to a decline of 5 percent in 2016, which is "credit positive" given real GDP contracted 0.7 percent last year.

Source: [Argaam](#)

Emirate of Sharjah sells \$1bn sukuk –official

The government of Sharjah, the third-largest constituent of the United Arab Emirates, has raised \$1 billion through a 10-year sukuk, the emirate's biggest transaction in debt capital markets, a government official said on Thursday. The Islamic bond issue, the first under Sharjah's newly established Sukuk program, was launched with initial price guidance of 150 basis points over the 10-year mid-swap rate and subsequently tightened to 135 bps. The deal priced on Wednesday.

Source: [Zawya](#)

More IPOs expected to emerge from public-private projects, says Kuwait Bourse head

The chief executive of Kuwait's stock exchange has said that it is expecting "another five-to-six" initial public offerings to emerge from the country's public-private partnership program within the next four years, following on from the forthcoming listing of the Shamal Azzour Al-Oula independent power and water plant. Speaking to Zawya on the sidelines of investment bank EFG Hermes' One on One investor conference in Dubai on Monday, Boursa Kuwait CEO Khaled AbdulRazzaq Al Khaled, said: "The role of PPP projects is big. This (Shamal Azzour Al-Oula) is one and we're expecting another five to six companies within the next three to four years to be introduced (to the market).

Source: [Zawya](#)

Saudi Aramco, SABIC sign deal with Britain's 'Wood Group' to develop world's largest crude oil to chemicals project

Oil giant Aramco and petrochemicals manufacturer SABIC selected on Thursday British energy services provider Wood Group to develop the world's largest fully integrated crude oil to chemicals (COTC) complex in Saudi Arabia. Wood Group will develop the \$20 billion complex and provide front-end engineering design and project management services during the engineering, procurement and construction phase. The energy service provider will also support the development of the complex that is expected to process 400,000 barrels a day and around 9 million tons of chemicals and base oils annually.

Source: [Arab News](#)

Saudi Aramco signs preliminary gas deal with Shell ahead of \$US2 trillion IPO

State oil giant Saudi Aramco signed a preliminary deal to pursue international gas opportunities with Royal Dutch Shell on Thursday as part of top crude exporter Saudi Arabia's diversification drive before the listing of Aramco. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in London between the two companies was during the official visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Britain, and would include gas upstream and liquefaction projects. "It is a discussion that began some time ago and now we have signed a memorandum to work on gas projects from upstream to downstream across the world and in Saudi Arabia. Concrete projects would be announced in due course," Shell chief executive Ben van Beurden told Reuters after the signing ceremony.

Source: [Financial Review](#)

Central Bank of Kuwait asks Islamic banks to provide reports about shares, plots, houses

The Central Bank of Kuwait has asked Islamic banks to provide it with reports about the shares, plots and residential houses, the ownership of which were transferred to the banks as debt settlements, reports Al-Rai daily quoting informed sources. They explained that the banks must refer quarterly reports in this regard to the Central Bank of Kuwait from March 2018 in order for the latter to be able to follow up the banks' commitment to the relevant regulations.

Source: [Zawya](#)

Creditors look to sell Saudi Arabia's Al-Gosaibi debt on rising price- sources

Bahrain-based Gulf International Bank (GIB) has sold its 513.6 million riyals (\$137 million) claim against Ahmad Hamad Al-Gosaibi and Brothers (AHAB), which has been locked in a near decade-long dispute with creditors, sources told Reuters. And now Standard Chartered, Dubai-based Emirates NBD and Bahrain's Arab Banking Corporation ABCB.BH are also seeking to sell AHAB debt totalling around 2.24 billion riyals, the financial sector sources said.

Source: [Zawya](#)

Italy's Eni and Abu Dhabi's ADNOC to Sign Deal on Sunday

Italian energy company Eni and state oil giant Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (ADNOC) are expected to sign a deal on Sunday, the Italian government and a source said. A statement from the Italian prime minister's office said a signing ceremony was scheduled to take place after premier Paolo Gentiloni meets Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan at the Emirates Palace on Sunday afternoon. It gave no details of the agreement between Eni and ADNOC. Eni will sign an offshore concession agreement with ADNOC, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters, declining to be identified as the deal was not yet public.

Source: [NY Times](#)

Emirates Global Aluminum to keep working with U.S. customers after tariff decision

Emirates Global Aluminum (EGA) said it would continue working with U.S. customers to support their businesses after President Donald Trump pressed ahead with a 10 percent import tariff on aluminum. "The full implications for demand and supply in the United States will only become clear over time," a company spokesman told Reuters on Friday.

Source: [Reuters](#)

Saudi Arabia's 'big concern' about listing its oil giant in New York

Saudi Arabia is considering where to sell shares in its mammoth oil company, Aramco, and New York, London and other international stock exchanges are still in the running. But speaking on a visit to London on Thursday, Saudi Arabia's top energy official made clear the kingdom has serious concerns about the risks it would run if it chose New York. "I would say litigation and liability are a big concern in the US," energy minister Khalid Al Falih told CNNMoney's emerging markets editor John Defterios. "Quite frankly, Saudi Aramco is too big and too important for the kingdom to be subjected to that kind of risk."

Source: [CNN](#)

Egypt sees budget deficit at 9.4 pct/GDP in 2017/18

Egypt's budget deficit for the 2017-2018 fiscal year is expected to reach 9.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), up from previous projections of about nine percent, the deputy finance minister told Reuters on Tuesday. The rise is due to an increase in global oil prices and high local interest rates, Mohamed Meait said.

Source: [Egypt Today](#)

CBE lowers interest rates 1% as inflation plummets

The Central Bank of Egypt lowered interest rates 1% as the inflation rates keeps going downhill, for the first time since the November Flotation. On Thursday, the Central Bank of Egypt's (CBE) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) discussed the interest rates. Last week, Capital Economics expected a 100 BP cut of the overnight deposit rate to 17.75 percent, adding that there is a risk that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will cut rates by more than this percentage.

Source: [Egypt Today](#)

Egypt's new tourism minister reviews airline incentives

Egypt is reviewing a system of incentives for airlines that were put in place to bring back foreign visitors, the new tourism minister said on Thursday. Egypt's tourism industry, a crucial source of hard currency, has suffered in the years of turmoil that followed the 2011 uprising, as well as from the suspected bombing of a Russian plane in Sinai in 2015, which killed all 224 people on board. Cairo has been offering airlines such as easyJet and tour operators such as TUI and Thomas Cook incentives to bring in more tourists.

Source: [Reuters](#)

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC & CORPORATE NEWS

Donald Trump signs order for metals tariff plan, prompting fears of trade war

Donald Trump pushed forward with plans to impose tariffs on steel and aluminium imports on Thursday, arguing the levies were necessary for national security and to stop the "assault on our country". Flanked by steel and aluminium workers and key staff, Trump said he had to act to stop the "decimation of entire communities" and insisted there would be a very fair process as the administration used the next 15 days to negotiate exemptions with allies. Canada and Mexico will be exempted.

Source: [The Guardian](#)

Draghi sees higher growth, lower inflation, warns Trump tariffs

The European Central Bank (ECB) on Thursday upgraded its economic growth forecasts, but cut inflation projections and showed concerns over potential US tariffs on steel and aluminum. Speaking at a press conference in Frankfurt, Germany, ECB governor Mario Draghi expected Eurozone inflation to register 1.4% in 2019, down from previous estimates of 1.5%. However, Draghi maintained inflation forecasts for 2018 and 2020 at 1.4% and 1.7%, respectively. On the other hand, the ECB's chairman lifted the bank's expectations for gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2018 to 2.4% from previous projections of 2.3% and kept 2019's growth rate forecasts at 1.9%.

Source: [Mubasher](#)

EU, Japan start push for exemptions from Trump tariffs

The European Union and Japan urged the United States on Saturday to grant them exemptions from metal import tariffs, with Tokyo calling for "calm-headed behavior" in a dispute that threatens to spiral into a trade war. U.S. President Donald Trump set import tariffs on Thursday of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum, to come into force in 15 days. But he exempted Canada and Mexico and held out the

possibility of excluding other allies. After meetings with U.S. trade envoy Robert Lighthizer in Brussels, EU and Japanese trade officials said negotiations would need to continue.

Source: [Reuters](#)

China says trade war with U.S. will only bring disaster to global economy

Any trade war with the United States will only bring disaster to the world economy, Chinese Commerce Minister Zhong Shan said on Sunday, as Beijing stepped up its criticism on proposed metals tariffs by Washington amid fears it could shatter global growth. After pressure from allies, the United States has opened the way for more exemptions from tariffs of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum that U.S. President Donald Trump set last week. On Saturday, the European Union and Japan urged the United States to grant them exemptions from metal import tariffs, with Tokyo calling for “calm-headed behavior.”

Source: [Reuters](#)

COMMODITIES NEWS

Oil prices rise nearly \$2 amid broad market optimism

Oil prices rose nearly \$2 on Friday, rebounding from two days of declines as Wall Street climbed on strong U.S. jobs data, while investors also grew hopeful that a planned meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un could ease geo-political tensions. Brent crude LCOc1 futures rose \$1.88 to settle at \$65.49 a barrel, a 2.96 percent gain. Brent traded between \$63.69 and \$65.63 during the session. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude CLc1 futures rose \$1.92 to settle at \$62.04 a barrel, a 3.19 percent gain. U.S. crude traded between \$60.14 and \$62.14.

Source: [NASDAQ](#)

Gold off lows as US dollar slips on slowing US wage gains

Gold prices bounced off their lows on Friday after the US dollar slipped against most of its peers as slowing wage gains foreshadowed a gradual inflation increase this year. US jobs growth posted its biggest increase in February in more than 1-1/2 years. Although the data increased the likelihood of interest rate rises, slower wage gains pointed to only a gradual increase in inflation. The US dollar index was down slightly against a basket of currencies, making dollar-priced gold less expensive for purchasers with other currencies.

Source: [Business Times](#)

MSM Proposed Dividends*

Company Name	Cash Div %	Cash DPS, OMR	Proposed Cash OMR '000	Net Earnings OMR'000	Cash Div payout, %	Cash Dividend Yield, %	Stock Dividend %	Stock Div, (OMR'000)	AGM Date	Total Payout	Ex-Dividend
BANKMUSCAT SAOG	30.0%	0.030	81,281	176,818	46.0%	7.2%	5.0%	13,547	18/03/2018	53.6%	
BANK DHOFAR SAOG	12.0%	0.012	27,094	47,627	56.9%	5.7%	8.0%	18,063	27/03/2018	94.8%	
BANK SOHAR	5.0%	0.005	8,923	25,331	35.2%	3.2%	10.0%	17,846		105.7%	
NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN SAOG	15.0%	0.015	23,228	44,021	52.8%	7.2%	5.0%	7,743	25/03/2018	70.4%	
HSBC BANK OMAN	5.7%	0.006	11,402	19,116	59.6%	5.1%			29/03/2018	59.6%	
AHLI BANK	10.0%	0.010	14,250	26,667	53.4%	6.2%	5.0%	7,125	27/03/2018	80.2%	
Banking Sector			166,178	340,371	49%	5.8%		64,324		67.7%	
OMAN UNITED INSURANCE CO	30.0%	0.030	3,000	3,345	89.7%	7.9%			29/03/2018	89.7%	
MUSCAT INSURANCE CO SAOG	5.0%	0.050	500	1,508	33.1%	5.9%	5.0%	500	21/03/2018	66.3%	
DHOFAR INSURANCE		0.000	-	(1,310)	0.0%	0.0%					
AL MADINA TAKAFUL CO SAOC	4.0%	0.004	700	397	176.3%	4.3%			26/03/2018		
VISION INSURANCE SAOC	14.0%	0.014	1,400	1,822	76.8%	9.0%			26/03/2018	76.8%	
NATIONAL LIFE & GENERAL INSU	15.9%	0.016	4,203	8,380	50.2%	5.0%			28/03/2018	50.2%	
AL AHLIA INSURANCE CO SAOC	27.0%	0.027	2,700	3,692	73.1%	7.5%			22/03/2018	73.1%	
OMAN QATAR INSURANCE CO	8.0%	0.008	800	1,872	42.7%	5.7%			21/03/2018	42.7%	
Insurance Sector			12,603	19,310	65%	5.0%		500		67.9%	
NATIONAL FINANCE CO		0.000	-	7,020	0.0%	0.0%				-	
MUSCAT FINANCE	8.0%	0.008	2,283	4,048	56.4%	7.1%	5.0%	1,427	22/03/2018	91.7%	
UNITED FINANCE CO	3.5%	0.004	1,222	2,175	56.2%	2.8%				56.2%	
OMAN ORIX LEASING CO.		0.000	-	5,427	0.0%	0.0%			25/03/2018	-	
AL-OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICE	17.0%	0.017	4,705	6,981	67.4%	6.2%	3.0%	830	19/03/2018	79.3%	
TAAGEER FINANCE	10.0%	0.010	2,536	4,703	53.9%	8.0%				53.9%	
Leasing Sector			10,746	30,354	35%	3.6%		2,257		42.8%	
OMINVEST	15.0%	0.015	10,491	20,532	51.1%	3.8%	10.0%	6,994	27/03/2018	85.2%	
DHOFAR INTL DEVELOPMENT	15.0%	0.015	3,696	1,028	359.5%	4.8%			27/03/2018	359.5%	
AL SHARQIYA INVEST HOLDING	5.0%	0.005	450	531	84.8%	4.4%			20/03/2018	84.8%	
Investment & Brokerage Sector			14,637	18,650	78%	3.3%		6,994		116.0%	
Total Financial Sector			204,164	408,685	50.0%	5.3%		74,075		68.1%	
SWEETS OF OMAN	20.0%	0.020	140	217	64.5%	1.5%			14/03/2018	64.5%	
OMAN REFRESHMENT CO	75.0%	0.075	3,750	10,817	34.7%	3.9%			27/02/2018	34.7%	Yes
SALALAH MILLS CO	50.0%	0.050	2,669	3,993	66.8%	3.8%				66.8%	
A'SAFFA FOODS SAOG	20.0%	0.020	2,400	4,327	55.5%	3.4%			29/03/2018	55.5%	
Food & Beverage Sector			8,959	21,010	43%	3.0%		-		42.6%	
OMAN CEMENT CO	30.0%	0.030	9,926	9,592	103.5%	7.7%			18/03/2018	103.5%	
RAYSUT CEMENT CO	29.0%	0.029	5,800	5,815	99.7%	3.6%			13/03/2018	99.7%	
Cement Sector			15,726	15,407	102%	5.5%		-		102.1%	
MUSCAT THREAD MILLS CO	5.0%	0.005	80	189	42.1%	5.7%	5.0%	80	06/03/2018	84.2%	
Textiles Sector			80	189	42%	5.7%		80		84.2%	
OMAN CHROMITE	16.0%	0.160	480	548	87.6%	4.4%			43223	87.6%	Yes
Mining Sector			480	898	53%	0.9%		-		53.5%	
AL-ANWAR CERAMIC TILES CO	6.0%	0.006	1,777	1,808	98.3%	4.6%			21/03/2018	98.3%	
AL JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS CO	24.0%	0.024	2,998	4,724	63.5%	7.5%			25/03/2018	63.5%	
AL MAHA CERAMICS CO SAOC	27.0%	0.027	1,485	1,506	98.6%	9.1%			27/03/2018	98.6%	
Construction Materials Support			6,260	7,285	86%	5.8%		-		85.9%	
OMAN PACKAGING	20.0%	0.020	649	1,015	63.9%	7.1%			01/03/2018	63.9%	Yes
COMPUTER STATIONERY INDS	7.0%	0.007	70	93	75.0%	2.7%			43254	75.0%	
Paper, Glass & Packaging			719	698	103%	2.8%		-		102.9%	
GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	14.5%	0.015	305	330	92.3%	6.1%			18/03/2018	92.3%	
OMAN CHLORINE	15.0%	0.015	1,022	1,000	102.2%	3.4%			28/03/2018	102.2%	
NATIONAL DETERGENT CO SAOG	45.0%	0.045	766	833	91.9%	6.9%			12/3/2018	91.9%	
Chemicals			2,092	2,162	97%	4.5%		-		96.7%	
NATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL	5.0%	0.005	499	1,601	31.2%	4.7%			22/02/2018	31.2%	Yes
Pharmaceuticals			499	1,601	31%	4.7%		-		31.2%	
VOLTAMP ENERGY SAOG	15.0%	0.015	1,062	3,027	35.1%	3.1%	15.0%	1,062	26/03/2018	70.2%	
OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	45.0%	0.045	4,037	6,845	59.0%	4.0%			26/03/2018	59.0%	
Electrical & Mechanical			5,098	9,871	52%	3.7%		1,062		62.4%	
Total Industrial Sector			39,912	26,467	150.8%	3.8%		1,141		155.1%	

Company Name	Cash Div %	Cash DPS, OMR	Cash Div payout, %	Cash Dividend Yield, %	Stock Dividend %	AGM Date	Total Payout	Ex-Dividend		
OMAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS CO	70.0%	0.070	52,500	79,717	65.9%	6.9%	22/3/2018	65.9%		
OOREDOO	42.0%	0.042	27,340	31,000	88.2%	8.6%	5/3/2018	88.2%		
Telecom Sector			79,840	110,717	72%	7.4%	-	72.1%		
GULF HOTELS (OMAN) CO LTD	30.0%	0.300	1,028	1,617	63.6%	2.9%	22/03/2018	63.6%		
UBAR HOTELS & RESORTS	4.0%	0.004	200	426	47.0%	3.1%	20/03/2018	47.0%		
HOTELS MANAGEMENT CO INT.	100.0%	1.000	3,000	2,583	116.1%	80.0%	12/3/2018	116.1%		
SAHARA HOSPITALITY	15.0%	0.150	919	2,477	37.1%	6.3%	5.0%	306	27/02/2018	49.5%
Tourism & Hospitality Sector			5,147	5,558	93%	5.9%	306	98.1%		
SALALAH PORT SERVICES	15.0%	0.015	2,698	5,210	51.8%	2.5%	22/3/2018	51.8%		
Logistics Sector			2,698	5,210	52%	2.5%	-	51.8%		
SHELL OMAN MARKETING	85.0%	0.085	8,331	12,897	64.6%	4.9%	22/03/2018	64.6%		
OMAN OIL MARKETING COMPANY	60.0%	0.060	3,710	8,869	41.8%	4.1%	18/03/2018	41.8%		
AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS M	65.0%	0.065	4,485	5,012	89.5%	6.7%	15/03/2018	89.5%		
NATIONAL GAS CO	5.0%	0.005	300	1,671	17.9%	1.7%	16.7%	21/03/2018	17.9%	
MUSCAT GASES COMPANY SAOG	72.0%	0.072	2,159	1,387	155.7%	12.9%	13/03/2018	155.7%		
Oil & Gas Marketing Sector			18,985	29,836	64%	5.2%	-	63.6%		
AL KAMIL POWER CO	25.0%	0.025	2,406	1,862	129.2%	8.0%	19/3/2018	129.2%		
UNITED POWER	150.0%	1.500	1,639	391	419.2%	36.6%	8/3/2018	419.2%		
PHOENIX POWER CO SAOG	6.2%	0.006	9,068	9,984	90.8%	4.5%	19/03/2018	90.8%		
OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING AN	10.0%	0.010	1,000	2,082	48.0%	5.3%	10.0%	1,000	21/03/2018	96.1%
SMN POWER HOLDING SAOG	19.0%	0.019	3,793	6,743	56.3%	2.9%	22/3/2018	56.3%		
SEMBORP SALALAH POWER & WAT	13.1%	0.013	12,505	10,969	114.0%	6.0%	8/3/2018	114.0%		
AL SUWADI POWER	9.0%	0.009	6,430	5,652	113.8%	6.4%	20/3/2018	113.8%		
AL BATINAH POWER	9.0%	0.009	6,074	4,556	133.3%	6.6%	20/3/2018	133.3%		
MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	9.3%	0.009	1,451	(301)	n/m	5.9%	27/03/2018	n/m		
Energy Sector			44,366	48,066	92%	4.4%	1,000	94.4%		
AL JAZEERA SERVICES	15.0%	0.015	918	1,631	56.3%	8.7%	21/03/2018	56.3%		
Diversified Commercial Services			918	(40,597)	-2%	0.5%	-	-2.3%		
Total Service Sector			151,954	159,995	95.0%	5.4%	1,306	95.8%		
Total Market			396,030	595,148	66.5%	5.1%	76,523	79.4%		

Source: MSM

For Ex-Dividend: Red Represents Ex-Dividend Today and grey represents Ex-dividend previously

*Includes Approved Dividends post-AGM

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