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COUNTRY RISK WEEKLY BULLETIN

NEWS HEADLINES

WORLD

Project finance loans up 23% to $87bn in first half of 2025

Global project finance loans totaled $207.5bn in the first half of 2025, constituting an increase of 22.7% from $169.1bn in the same period of 2024; while the number of project finance transactions reached 433 globally in the first half of 2025, down by 2% from 442 deals in the same period last year. The distribution of project finance loans shows that transactions in the Americas amounted to $112.8bn and accounted for 54.4% of aggregate financing in the first half of 2025, followed by the Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) with $70bn (33.7%) and Asia-Pacific & Japan with $24.7bn (12%). Also, there were 204 transactions in the Americas, or 47.1% of the total, followed by the EMEA region with 167 deals (38.6%), and Asia-Pacific & Japan with 63 transactions (14.5%). Further, the power sector accounted for $104bn or 50% of project finance loans in the first half of 2025, followed by telecommunications firms with $54bn (26%), the transportation sector with $17bn (8.2%), the oil & gas industry with $16bn (7.7%), and the industrial sector with $5bn (2.4%). Also, there were 294 project finance transactions in the power sector or 68% of the total number of deals in the first half of 2025, followed by the telecommunications sector with 44 transactions (10.2%), transportation firms with 37 deals (8.5%), the oil & gas industry with 18 transactions (4.2%), and the industrial sector with eight deals (1.8%).

Source: Refinitiv

Global personal wealth up by 4.6% in 2024

The Swiss bank UBS' annual survey on global wealth indicates that total global personal wealth rose by 4.6% in 2024 relative to an increase of 4.2% in 2023 and to a decrease of 3% in 2022. Further, it said that personal wealth grew by 11.35% in the Americas in 2024, followed by the Asia Pacific region (APAC) with an increase of 2.85%, and the Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region with a pickup of 0.44%. In parallel, it stated that the Americas accounted for 39.3% of global wealth in 2025 relative to 37.3% in 2023, followed by the APAC region with 35.9% in 2024 compared to 36.9% in the previous year, and the EMEA region with 24.8% in 2024 relative to 25.8% in 2023. It pointed out that global financial wealth increased by 6.2% in US dollar terms, non-financial wealth grew by 1.7%, while the amount of total debt remained unchanged. Also, it indicated that total personal wealth in Eastern Europe jumped by 12% in 2024 from 2023, followed by North America (+12%), the Middle East & Africa (+4.23%), Greater China (+3.42%), and Southeast Asia (+2.67%). In contrast, it said that personal wealth in Latin America decreased by 4.3% in 2024, followed by Oceania (-1.54%), and Western Europe (-1.48%). Further, it stated that the average wealth per adult in North America reached $593,347 at end-2024, followed by Oceania with $496,696, Western Europe with $287,688, Greater China with $88,985, the Middle East & Africa with $81,405, Eastern Europe with $48,638, Southeast Asia with $40,753 and Latin America with $34,694.

Source: UBS

MENA

Investments in startups at $1.9bn in first seven months of 2025

Figures released by online platform neuron.digitaldigest, a market intelligence dashboard, show that investments in startups in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region reached $1.9bn in the first seven months of 2025, while the number of investments in startups totaled 291 in the covered period. Also, it noted that investments in Saudi Arabia-based startups stood at $952m, or 50% of placements in the region's startups in the first seven months of 2025, followed by startups in the UAE with $744.8m (39.2%), and Egypt with $157.7m (8.3%), while $45.6m were invested in the remaining MENA startups, or 2.4% of the total in the covered period. Further, there were 101 transactions in Saudi Arabia startups, or 34.7% of the total, in the first seven months of 2025, followed by the UAE with 97 deals (33.3%), Egypt with 43 transactions (14.8%); while the number of transactions in other MENA startups stood at 50 deals, or 17.2% of total transactions, in the covered period. In parallel, it pointed out that investments in startups in the MENA region totaled $744.3m and covered 47 deals in July 2025, as investments in Saudi Arabia-based startups stood at $382.6m, or 51.4% of the total, followed by startups in the UAE with $346.8m (46.6%), while $14.9m were invested in the remaining MENA startups, or 2% of the total, in July 2025. Further, there were 20 transactions in UAE startups, or 42.6% of the total in July 2025, followed by Saudi Arabia with 15 deals (32%); while there were 12 deals in other MENA startups, or 25.5% of total transactions in July 2025.

Source: neuron.digitaldigest

SAUDI ARABIA

Greenfield FDI up 2% to $9.3bn in first half of 2025

Figures compiled by fDi Markets show that greenfield foreign direct investments (FDI) in Saudi Arabia reached $9.34bn in the first half of 2025, constituting an increase of 1.7% from $9.18bn in the same period of 2024. There were 203 greenfield FDI projects in the Kingdom in the first half of 2025 compared to 156 projects in the same period last year. Riyadh attracted $2.3bn in greenfield FDI and accounted for 24.6% of the total in the first half of 2025, followed by Dammam with $1.28bn (13.7%), and Jeddah with $1.22bn (13.1%). Further, the communication sector attracted $1.92bn in greenfield FDI, or 20.6% of the total in the first half of 2025, followed by the real estate sector with $1.8bn (19.2%), the electronics industry with $879.3m (9.4%), the transportation and warehousing services sector with $779m (8.3%), and the chemicals industry with $765.4m (8.2%); while other sectors attracted $3.2bn in greenfield FDI projects, or 34.3% of the total. Also, the business services sector attracted 55 greenfield FDI projects, or 27.1% of the total in the first half of 2025, followed by the software and information technology sector with 35 projects (17.2%), manufacturing with 26 projects (12.8%), and the transportation & warehousing services and industrial equipment sectors with 14 projects each (6.9% each); while other sectors attracted 59 greenfield FDI projects, or 29% of the total.

Source: fDi Markets, Emirates NBD

OUTLOOK

WORLD

Economic activity to pick up in 2026 on reduced impact of tariffs

Citi Research projected the global real GDP to growth rate at 2.5% in 2025, with growth slowing from 2.4% in the first half of the year to 1.8% in the second half, and forecast it to pick up to 2.6% in 2026, with economic activity rebounding to 2.9% in the first half and 2.8% in the second half of the year. Also, it forecast the global inflation rate to decelerate from 2.8% in 2025 to 2.5% in 2026. It considered that the mechanism of tariff transmission has been slow to emerge, and that consumers and firms have absorbed the tariff-related uncertainties surprisingly well. It said that the tariffs currently announced imply an overall U.S. tariff rate of around 18% and estimated that the tariff rate could exceed 20% when additional sectoral tariffs, including on pharmaceuticals and electronics, are fully implemented.

Further, it projected the real GDP of advanced economies (AEs) to grow by 1.4% this year and by 1.5% next year, and forecast economic activity in emerging markets (EMs) at 4% in each of 2025 and 2026. Also, it estimated the real GDP growth rate of Emerging Asia to decelerate from 4.8% this year to 4.5% in 2026, and to slow down in Emerging Europe from 1.6% in 2025 to 1.4% next year. In addition, it projected the real GDP growth rate of the Middle East and Africa (ME&A) region to pick up from 3.9% in 2025 to 4.4 % in 2026.

In parallel, it forecast the current account deficit of AEs to narrow from 0.9% of GDP this year to 0.3% of GDP in 2026, and for the current account surplus in EMs to decline from 1.8% of GDP in 2025 to 1.6% of GDP next year. It said Emerging Asia and the ME&A region will post average surpluses of 2.7% of GDP and 2.2% of GDP, respectively, in the 2025-26 period; while Emerging Europe and Latin America will register average deficits of 0.6% of GDP and 1.8% of GDP, respectively, during the covered period. It considered that risks to the outlook are balanced, with upside risks reflecting the resilience of the global economy in the past few years and its ability to shake off any further softening from tariffs. It added that downside risks consist of a more significant impact from the tariffs, but it noted that the likelihood of severe downside risks are diminishing.

Source: Citi Research

ARMENIA

Growth to average 4.5% in 2026-28 period

S&P Global Ratings projected Armenia's real GDP growth rate to decelerate from 5.9% in 2024 to 4.8% in 2025 and to average 4.5% annually in the 2026-28 period, amid geopolitical uncertainties, despite the signing a U.S.-brokered framework agreement with Azerbaijan in August 2025, higher investments, rising domestic consumption, and the planned launch of the Amulsar gold mine. It attributed the relative economic slowdown to the gradual ending of the extraordinary support from financial and labor inflows from Russia since the onset of the war in Ukraine in 2022. It considered that the Armenian economy remains structurally reliant on Russia, particularly in trade, remittance flows and energy, which poses risks to the economic outlook. Further, it expected the inflation rate to reach 3.6% in 2025 and to average 3.3% in the 2026-28 period, due to higher food and energy prices.

Further, it forecast the fiscal deficit at 5.2% of GDP in 2025 and to average 3.9% of GDP in the 2026-28 period. It expected fiscal consolidation to begin in 2026 under a new medium-term expenditures strategy that the government adopted in June. Also, it projected the public debt level to increase from 49% of GDP at end-2025 to 52.1% of GDP in the 2026-28 period. It said that approximately 50% of the public debt is denominated in foreign currency, which exposes the debt to exchange rate fluctuations. But it noted that a large share of the foreign currency-denominated debt originates from bilateral lenders and international financial institutions at concessional terms, which helps reduce refinancing and debt-servicing risks.

In parallel, it forecast the current account deficit at 4.5% of GDP in 2025 and to average 4.3% of GDP in the 2026-28 period, due to a slowdown of remittance inflows and exports. It expected the deficit to be financed from a combination of external borrowing and net foreign direct investments that it projected to average 1.8% of GDP in the 2026-28 period. Also, it forecast official usable foreign currency reserves to rise from $3.3bn at the end of 2025 to $3.9bn at end-2028.

Source: S&P Global Ratings

PAKISTAN

Outlook contingent on accelerating structural reforms

The Institute of International Finance (IIF) projected Pakistan's real GDP growth rate at 2.7% in FY2024/25 and at 3.5% in FY2025/26, supported by easing financial conditions and improved investor confidence. However, it noted that the economic growth rate in FY2024/25 fell slightly below the IIF's forecast due to weak agricultural production, which was partially offset by the resilient performance of the services sector. Also, it anticipated geopolitical risks and domestic political instability to affect economic activity in FY25/26. It considered that the pace of implementation of structural reforms is inadequate, as the government did not maximize favorable conditions to carry out durable reforms. Moreover, it expected persistent structural weaknesses, low investments, weak productivity, energy outages, a narrow export base, and a poor business environment to weigh on potential economic activity. It said that the government plans to gradually reduce the average customs duty from 19% to 9.5% in the next five years, indicating a shift from import substitution towards export-led growth.

In addition, it projected the fiscal deficit at 5.4% of GDP in FY2024/25, despite a primary budget surplus of 2.4% of GDP during the fiscal year, and at 5.5% of GDP in FY2025/26, driven by an expected but potentially unsustainable increase in tax revenues. Further, it forecast the public debt level at 64.8% of GDP at end-June 2025 and 63.3% of GDP by end-June 2026. However, it anticipated fiscal risks to dominate the outlook, as the headline progress on reforms is masking the underlying weaknesses, and considered that fiscal performance will remain the key test for the International Monetary Fund's program.

In parallel, the IIF projected the current account balance to shift from a surplus of 2.1% of GDP in FY2024/25 to a deficit of 2.3% of GDP in FY2025/26, driven by a rebound in imports, which would outpace export growth.

Source: Institute of International Finance

ECONOMY & TRADE

GCC

Insurers' revenues at $19.5bn in first half of 2025

The aggregate revenues of 76 listed insurance companies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries reached $19.5bn in the first half of 2025, constituting an increase of 8.1% from $18bn in the same period of 2024. The revenues of insurers in Saudi Arabia totaled $9.1bn and accounted for 46.5% of total insurance revenues in the GCC in the first half of 2025, followed by the revenues of insurers in the UAE with $5.6bn (28.6% of total), Qatar with $2.1bn (10.7%), Kuwait with $1.58bn (8%), Oman with $900m (4.6%), and Bahrain with $294m (1.5%). Also, the revenues of insurers in the UAE surged by 20.4% in the first half of 2025, followed by the receipts of Bahrain insurers (+15.3%), Oman insurers (+11.5%), insurance firms in Saudi Arabia (+7.4%), and Qatari insurers (+2.4%), while the revenues of Kuwaiti insurers decreased by 15.5% in the covered period. In addition, the net income of the 76 insurers totaled $1.2bn in the first half of the year and increased by 0.8% from $1.19bn in the same period of 2024. The profits of insurance firms in the UAE stood at $425m and represented 35.5% of the total in the first half of 2025, followed by the net income of insurers in Saudi Arabia with $343m (28.7% of the total), Qatar with $230m (19.2%), Kuwait with $130m (11%), Oman with $43m (3.6%), and Bahrain with $26m (2.2%). In parallel, the net combined ratio of the 76 insurers stood at 96.6% in the first half of 2025 relative to 95.7% in the same period of 2024.

Source: Insurance Monitor

SAUDI ARABIA

Sovereign rating affirmed on strong fiscal and external buffers

Fitch Ratings affirmed the long-term foreign and local currency Issuer Default Ratings of Saudi Arabia at 'A+', and maintained the 'stable' outlook on the long-term ratings. It said that the ratings reflect the country's robust fiscal and external balance sheets, with the public debt level and the sovereign’s net foreign assets higher than the medians of 'A' and 'AA'-rated sovereigns. It stated that the ratings are supported by the Kingdom’s elevated liquid foreign currency reserves amid a small current account surplus. It expected economic growth to be strong in the near term, driven by increases in oil production, and anticipated non-oil growth to be robust, supported by the implementation of reforms, high capital expenditures, and elevated spending by government-related entities. But it noted that the ratings are constrained by the economy’s dependence on the hydrocarbon sector, and low scores on the World Bank’s governance indicators relative to similarly-rated peers. It forecast the public debt level to increase from 29.7% of GDP at end-2025 to 35.1% of GDP at end-2027, but to remain well below the projected median of 57.3% of GDP of similarly-rated peers. Also, it anticipated the current account deficit to widen from 2.9% of GDP in 2025 to 4.2% of GDP in 2026 in case of lower oil revenues and a higher import bill. Further, it said that it could downgrade the ratings if public finances deteriorate, if the government’s debt level increases, and/or if regional geopolitical tensions escalate. In contrast, it said that it could upgrade the ratings if fiscal reforms significantly increase the budget's resilience to oil price volatility, and/or if reforms support the expansion of the non-hydrocarbon economy.

Source: Fitch Ratings

IRAQ

Ratings trend contingent on fiscal and external account dynamics

S&P Global Ratings indicated that Iraq's short- and long-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings of 'B' and 'B-', respectively, are supported by the sovereign's sound external position and usable foreign currency reserves, despite the country’s high dependence on the oil sector and limited data quality compared to similarly-rated peers. But it said that the ratings are constrained by Iraq's weak institutions, as well as by elevated domestic and regional security risks compared to similarly-rated peers. It expected the country's net external asset position to exceed the external debt by 75% in the 2025-28 period, due to the Central Bank of Iraq’s elevated foreign currency reserves and the economy's low external debt level, as it projected usable foreign currency reserves to rise from $96bn at the end of 2024 to $103bn by end-2028. It added that the 'stable' outlook balances the agency's expectations that Iraq's foreign currency reserves will continue to comfortably exceed the government's debt-servicing obligations in the next 12 months, against significant risks from political uncertainties in the country, the weak institutional framework, and the lack of economic diversification. Further, it forecast Iraq's gross external financing needs at 50.5% of current account receipts plus usable reserves in 2025, as well as at 48.6% in 2026, 48.4% in 2027 and 47.7% in 2028 of such receipts and reserves. In parallel, it indicated that it could upgrade the ratings in case higher-than-expected real GDP growth supports the country's fiscal and external balances, and/or if institutional reforms improve the government's debt-servicing capacity.

Source: S&P Global Ratings

ARMENIA

Decline on geopolitical risks to support growth

Fitch Ratings indicated that the peace framework agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan represents a positive step toward a comprehensive bilateral accord and reduces the risk of renewed hostilities. It noted that a final peace deal is unlikely to have an immediate impact on the country’s sovereign ratings, but it considered that a sustained reduction in geopolitical risks could support Armenia’s economic growth and help reduce foreign currency volatility and fiscal pressures, particularly through lower defense spending in the medium term. Further, it projected the fiscal deficit to average 4.4% of GDP in the 2026–27 period, with the impact of elevated spending pressures partly mitigated by strong revenue performance. Also, it expected that the decline in tensions with Armenia’s neighboring countries would allow the authorities to focus on improving the business environment to support economic growth and enhance diversification. It added that this could include governance reforms, although the extent of political support for such reforms remains uncertain. In parallel, it expected the normalization of relations with Türkiye and a durable decline in geopolitical risks to depend on the final terms of the peace agreement with Azerbaijan and their implementation. It added that the country's governance scores are broadly in line with the median of 'BB'-rated peers, except on the political stability factor. Further, the agency anticipated that faster access of Armenian exports to European markets via Türkiye could support the country’s medium-term growth prospects.

Source: Fitch Ratings

BANKING

MOROCCO

Banks' ratings affirmed, outlook 'stable'

Capital Intelligence Ratings affirmed the long- and short-term foreign currency ratings of Banque Centrale Populaire (BCP) and Attijariwafa Bank (AWB) at 'BBB- and 'A3', respectively. Also, it affirmed the ratings of Bank of Africa (BOA) and Saham Bank (SB) at 'BB+' and 'B', respectively. Further, it affirmed the Bank Standalone Ratings (BSRs) of SB, AWB, and BCP at 'bb' and the BSR of BOA at 'bb-'; while it maintained the 'stable' outlook on the long-term foreign currency ratings and BSRs of the four banks. Also, it affirmed the Core Financial Strength (CFS) of BCP and AWB at 'bb+', the CFS of SB at 'bb' and of BOA at 'bb-'. It stated that the ratings of the four banks are constrained by their elevated non-performing loan ratios. It added that modest capital ratios are weighing on the ratings of AWB and BOA, while adequate capital buffers underpin the ratings of SB and BCP. It noted that the ratings of SB, BCP and BOA are supported by their satisfactory liquidity and funding profiles, while the rating of AWB reflects its solid liquidity metrics and adequate funding. Also, it indicated that the ratings of AWB and BCP are supported by their strong franchise, while the ratings of SB and BOA take into account their good franchise. In addition, it pointed out that the four banks benefit from high extraordinary support from the government in case of need.

Source: Capital Intelligence Ratings

TÜRKIYE

Banks raise $9bn on global capital markets

Fitch Ratings indicated that Turkish banks raised $8.8bn on international capital markets since June 2024, despite a short pause in March 2025, which reflects resilient investor demand and continued access to funding. It noted that banks were able to issue different types of debt, including Additional Tier 1 (AT1) instruments for smaller lenders, which signals investor confidence despite domestic and international turbulence. It indicated that Turkish banks returned to the market June with notable deals, including the issuance of Eurobonds and subordinated debt from both large and small institutions. Further, it noted that banks with limited market share were able to issued junior debt, indicating sustained access to capital. It added that the rollovers of syndicated loans since last April exceeded 100% of maturing volumes, with improved pricing and longer maturities. It attributed the banks' improved access to debt markets to the authorities' renewed commitment to orthodox monetary policy and disinflation, which has helped restore investor sentiment and contain external pressures, particularly from capital outflows. Also, it pointed out that the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye (CBRT) raised its policy rate by 350 basis points (bps) in response to the markets' volatility last March, but the CBRT resumed its easing cycle in July as it lowered the policy rate by 300 bps to 43%, while the agency projected further cuts to 35% by the end of 2025. However, it considered that refinancing risks could increase if market volatility or a change in Turkiye's macroeconomic policy direction weaken investor or depositor confidence, given the banks' significant short-term external debt and elevated dollarization rate of deposits, as well as in case of a potentially more volatile global funding environment.

Source: Fitch Ratings

GHANA

Most banks to be capital-compliant by end-2025

Fitch Ratings considered that the vast majority of Ghanaian banks are on track to comply with capital requirements once regulatory forbearance related to Ghana's default on its sovereign obligations expires at the end of 2025, and noted that the banks' compliance is supported by their strong profits, slow growth of risk-weighted assets, and capital injections in some cases. It noted that the domestic debt exchange program (DDEP), which the authorities launched in December 2022 and concluded in 2023, imposed substantial losses on the banking sector and significantly weakened the banks' capitalization due to their high exposure to sovereign securities. As such it said that the Bank of Ghana lifted the 3% capital conservation buffer, which reduced the minimum total capital adequacy ratio requirement from 13% to 10%. Also, it indicated that the sector's tangible common equity to tangible assets ratio improved from 7.4% at end-2022 to 10.3% at end-March 2025, driven by the banks' strong profitability, due to high interest rates and elevated yields on Treasury bills, which were excluded from the DDEP. Further, it said that the banking sector's capitalization has recovered considerably since the DDEP, but it estimated that six banks are unlikely to meet the capital requirements through internal capital generation, as it noted that they will need to seek capital injections, merge with or be acquired by better-capitalized banks, or receive extended forbearance to retain sufficient earnings over time. It added that the authorities have already provided capital support to two undercapitalized and government-owned banks. It expected that additional capital support by the authorities will help the undercapitalized banks to meet regulatory capital requirements.

Source: Fitch Ratings

PAKISTAN

Banks' ratings upgraded on favorable operating conditions

Moody's Ratings upgraded the long-term deposit ratings of Allied Bank Limited (ABL), Habib Bank Ltd. (HBL), MCB Bank (MCB), National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) and United Bank Ltd. (UBL) from 'Caa2' to 'Caa1', which are seven notches below investment grade. Also, it upgraded the Baseline Credit Assessments (BCAs) of ABL, HBL, MCB and UBL from 'caa2' to 'caa1', and the BCA of NBP from 'caa3' to 'caa2'. Further, it revised the outlook on the banks' long-term ratings from 'positive' to 'stable'. It attributed the ratings' upgrade to its similar action on the sovereign ratings due to Pakistan's improving operating environment, the high capacity of the government to support the banks in case of need, and the banks' own resilient financial performance. In parallel, it noted that the 'stable' outlook reflects steady disinflation, moderate profitability, and adequate liquidity. It pointed out the ratings of the five banks balance their ample liquidity buffers against their modest capital metrics. It said that the ratings of HBL and NBP are supported by their strong funding base, while elevated non-performing loans ratios constrain the ratings of NBP, UBL and MCB. In addition, the agency said that it could downgrade the ratings in case of a deterioration in the banks' financial metrics. In contrast, it noted that it could upgrade the ratings if the banks maintain their resilient financial performance and/or if the operating environment improves.

Source: Moody's Ratings

ENERGY / COMMODITIES

Oil prices to reach $67.8 p/b in third quarter of 2025

The prices of ICE Brent Crude oil front-month future contracts reached $68.8 per barrel (p/b) on August 25, 2025, constituting an increase of 3.3% from $66.6 p/b a week earlier, as traders anticipated that additional U.S. sanctions on Russian oil and Ukrainian strikes on Russia's energy infrastructure could lead to disruptions in oil supply. However, oil prices regressed to $68.05p/b on August 27, 2025, as global supply concerns eased after Russia announced that a major refinery, which was previously damaged by a drone attack, would resume operations sooner than expected. In parallel, Goldman Sachs expected Brent oil prices to decline to less than $50 p/b by late 2026, as it anticipated the global oil market surplus to increase to 1.8 million barrels per day (b/d) between the fourth quarter of 2025 and the fourth quarter of 2026, resulting into a rise of nearly 800 million barrels in global inventories by the end of 2026. Also, it expected the oil stocks of OECD countries to account for 33.3% of global oil inventories or about 270 million b/d by end-2026. In addition, the International Energy Agency projected global oil demand to rise by 680,000 b/d to 104.4 million b/d in 2025, despite lower demand from Brazil, China, Egypt, and India. It revised its forecast for global oil supply from an increase of 370,000 b/d to a rise of 2.5 million b/d in 2025, which include 1.3 million b/d from non-OPEC+ producers, and given that the OPEC+ coalition ended its oil production cut. It considered that weaker global economic growth is likely to dampen oil demand more significantly than the impact of new sanctions on Russia and Iran. Further, Refinitiv projected oil prices, through its latest crude oil price poll of 37 industry analysts, to average $67.82 p/b in the third quarter and $67.84 p/b in full year 2025.

Source: Goldman Sachs, International Energy Agency, Refinitiv, Byblos Research

OPEC oil output nearly unchanged in July 2025

Member countries of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), based on secondary sources, produced an average of 27.54 million barrels of oil per day (b/d) in July 2025, nearly unchanged from 27.28 million b/d in June 2025. On a country basis, Saudi Arabia produced 9.53 million b/d, or 34.6% of OPEC's total output, followed by Iraq with 3.9 million b/d (14.2%), Iran with 3.25 million b/d (11.8%), the UAE with 3.17 million b/d (11.5%), and Kuwait with 2.45 million b/d (9%).

Source: OPEC

Algeria's oil exports down 29% in June 2025

Crude oil production in Algeria reached 927,000 barrels per day (b/d) in June 2025, constituting an increase of 0.8% from 920,000 b/d in May 2025. Further, aggregate crude oil exports stood at 378,000 b/d in June 2025, and declined by 29% from 533,000 b/d in May 2025.

Source: JODI, 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 13.81 million barrels per day (b/d) in 2025, which would constitute an increase of 2.3% from 13.5 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

Base Metals: Copper prices to average $8,817 per ton in third quarter of 2025

LME copper cash prices averaged $9,496.1 per ton in the year-to-August 27, 2025 period, constituting an increase of 4.1% from an average of $9,120.4 a ton in the same period of 2024. The increase in prices was due to tight supply conditions, as well as to elevated demand from green technologies, particularly in renewable energy and electric vehicles. Further, the metal's price dropped from a peak of $10,800.8 a ton on May 20, 2024 to $9,878.1 per ton on July 23, 2025 as a result of global economic uncertainties that have reduced demand for industrial metals such as copper. In parallel, the latest available figures from the International Copper Study Group (ICSG) show that global demand for refined copper was 13.96 million tons in the first half of 2025, constituting an increase of 4.8% from 13.21 million tons in the same period of 2024, due to a rise of 7.5% in Chinese demand for the metal. Also, it noted that the global production of refined copper reached 14.21 million tons in the first half of 2025, up by 3.6% from 13.72 million tons in the same period of 2024, as higher output from China and the Democratic Republic of the Congo was partially offset by lower production in Chile and Japan. It added that mine production accounted for 80.5% of the aggregate output of refined copper in the covered period relative to 81.2% in the same period of 2024. Further, S&P Global Market Intelligence forecast copper prices at $8,816.9 per ton in the third quarter of 2025, with a low of $8,255.4 a ton and a high of $9,680 per ton per ounce in the covered quarter.

Source: ICSG, S&P Global Market Intelligence, Refinitiv, Byblos Research

Precious Metals: Gold prices to average $3,311.7 per ounce in third quarter of 2025

Gold prices averaged $3,141.5 per ounce in the year-to-august 27, 2025 period, constituting an increase of 39.1% from an average of $2,258.7 a ton in the same period of 2024, due mainly to strong demand from central banks around the world, as well as to concerns about global economic uncertainties. Further, gold prices reached an all-time high of $3,428.3 per ounce on July 22, 2025, supported by a weaker U.S. dollar and lower U.S. Treasury yields. Further, figures released by the World Gold Council show that global inflows to gold-backed exchange-traded funds reached 22.8 tons in July 2025, with inflows of 12.5 tons in North America, 10.9 tons in Europe, 0.8 tons in Asia, and outflows of 1.5 tons in other regions. In comparison, global inflows from gold-backed ETFs stood at 47.7 tons in July 2024, with inflows of 25.7 tons in North America, 16.6 tons in Europe, 4.6 tons in Asia, and 0.9 tons in other regions. In addition, it pointed out that gold-backed ETFs in North America shifted from outflows of 15.6 tons in May 2025 to inflows of 44.3 tons in June and to inflows of 12.5 tons in July 2025, despite geopolitical and economic uncertainties, and fluctuating market sentiment. Further, S&P Global Market Intelligence projected gold prices to average $3,311.7 per ounce in the third quarter of 2025, with a low of $3,200 an ounce and a high of $3,500 per ounce.

Source: World Gold Council, S&P Global Market Intelligence, Refinitiv, Byblos Research

COUNTRY RISK METRICS

Countries	LT Foreign currency rating				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 (%)
	S&P	Moody's	Fitch	CI								
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	CCC+ 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	BB+ Positive	Ba1 Stable	BB+ Stable	- -	-4.1	65.8	4.9	30.4	7.3	94.0	-1.4	0.5
Nigeria	B- Stable	Caa1 Positive	B- Positive	- -	-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	CCC+ -	- -	-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+ Negative	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	A+ 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				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 (%)
	S&P	Moody's	Fitch	CI								
Asia												
Armenia	BB-	Ba3	BB-	B+								
	Stable	Stable	Stable	Positive	-4.6	49.8	2.0	29.6	11.5	114.7	-3.1	2.2
China	A+	A1	A+	-								
	Stable	Negative	Stable	-	-3.0	65.2	10.9	20.6	5.8	60.9	2.3	0.7
India	BBB-	Baa3	BBB-	-								
	Stable	Stable	Stable	-	-7.8	84.0	7.3	29.8	25.2	82.2	-1.3	1.0
Kazakhstan	BBB-	Baa2	BBB	-								
	Stable	Positive	Stable	-	-3.1	26.4	4.1	29.4	8.1	100.4	-2.8	2.2
Pakistan	B-	Caa1	B-	-								
	Stable	Stable	Stable	-	-7.5	71.3	0.7	34.9	55.9	133.4	-1.3	0.4
Bangladesh	B+	B2	B+	-								
	Stable	Negative	Stable	-	-4.8	32.1	3.8	29.0	29.0	102.8	-1.5	0.4
Central & Eastern Europe												
Bulgaria	BBB	Baa1	BBB	-								
	Positive	Stable	Positive	-	-2.5	24.5	2.0	19.5	1.5	102.8	-0.5	2.0
Romania	BBB-	Baa3	BBB-	-								
	Stable	Stable	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-	B03	BB-	BB-								
	Stable	Stable	Stable	Stable	-5.1	27.0	1.4	63.6	10.8	149.0	-1.2	0.4
Ukraine	CC	Ca	CC	-								
	Negative	Stable	-	-	-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	Last meeting Action	Next meeting
USA	Fed Funds Target Rate	4.50	30-Jul-25	Raised 110bps	17-Sep-25
Eurozone	Refi Rate	2.15	24-Jul-25	No change	11-Sep-25
UK	Bank Rate	4.25	19-Jun-25	No change	07-Aug-25
Japan	O/N Call Rate	0.50	31-Jul-25	No change	19-Sep-25
Australia	Cash Rate	3.60	12-Aug-25	Cut 25bps	30-Sep-25
New Zealand	Cash Rate	3.00	20-Aug-25	Cut 25bps	08-Oct-25
Switzerland	SNB Policy Rate	0.00	19-Jun-25	Cut 25bps	25-Sep-25
Canada	Overnight rate	2.75	30-Jul-25	No change	17-Sep-25
Emerging Markets					
China	One-year Loan Prime Rate	3.00	21-Jul-25	No change	20-Aug-25
Hong Kong	Base Rate	4.75	19-Dec-24	Cut 25bps	N/A
Taiwan	Discount Rate	2.00	19-Jun-25	No change	18-Sep-25
South Korea	Base Rate	2.50	10-Jul-25	No change	28-Aug-25
Malaysia	O/N Policy Rate	2.75	09-Jul-25	Cut 25bps	04-Sep-25
Thailand	1D Repo	1.50	13-Aug-25	Cut 25bps	08-Oct-25
India	Repo Rate	5.50	06-Aug-25	Cut 50pbs	01-Oct-25
UAE	Base Rate	4.40	18-Dec-24	Cut 25bps	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Repo Rate	5.00	18-Dec-24	Cut 25bps	N/A
Egypt	Overnight Deposit	24.00	10-Jul-25	No change	28-Aug-25
Jordan	CBJ Main Rate	6.50	22-Dec-24	Cut 25bps	N/A
Türkiye	Repo Rate	43.00	24-Jul-25	Cut 300bps	11-Sep-25
South Africa	Repo Rate	7.00	31-Jul-25	Cut 25bps	18-Sep-25
Kenya	Central Bank Rate	9.50	12-Aug-25	Cut 25bps	N/A
Nigeria	Monetary Policy Rate	27.50	22-Jul-25	No change	23-Sep-25
Ghana	Prime Rate	25.00	30-Jul-25	Cut 300bps	17-Sep-25
Angola	Base Rate	19.50	18-Jul-25	No change	19-Sep-25
Mexico	Target Rate	7.75	07-Aug-25	Cut 25bps	25-Sep-25
Brazil	Selic Rate	15.00	30-Jul-25	No change	N/A
Armenia	Refi Rate	6.75	05-Aug-25	No change	16-Sep-25
Romania	Policy Rate	6.50	08-Aug-25	No change	N/A
Bulgaria	Base Interest	1.82	01-Aug-25	Cut 9bps	01-Sep-25
Kazakhstan	Repo Rate	16.50	11-Jul-25	No change	29-Aug-25
Ukraine	Discount Rate	15.50	24-Jul-25	No change	11-Sep-25
Russia	Refi Rate	18.00	25-Jul-25	Cut 200bps	12-Sep-25

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