Qatar Insurance (QIC) Group, the largest regional insurance group in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), has registered a strong growth in gross written premiums (GWP) to QR12.8bn in 2019.

Driven by a healthy demand for personal and motor insurance, Qatar Re, QIC Group’s global multi-line arm of business, the group witnessed a surge to QR12.8bn in 2019 compared to QR10.7bn in 2018.

The group’s stable underwriting results and strong investment income translated into a consolidated net profit for 2019 of QR671mn compared to QR664mn in the previous year.

QIC’s operations particularly benefitted from stronger economic growth and diversification in the region, the group said.

The group’s stable underwriting results continued to perform well with a gross underwriting profit of QR576mn compared to QR355mn in 2018. As a result, the group’s net underwriting result was QR355mn against QR576mn in 2018.

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Russia oil output rises as new OPEC+ quota excludes condensate

Bloomberg

Russia’s oil production increased in the five-month high in January following an agreement with the OPEC+ to exclude condensate from its quota. The nation pumped 137.72 million barrels of crude and condensate — a light oil extracted from natural gas — last month, Interfax reported, citing preliminary data. The nation’s output was 540,000 barrels a day above its OPEC+ quota of 136.62 million barrels a day in January, according to the survey. That’s down from 640,000 barrels a day from December’s revised figures. Despite the drop in supplies, the nation remains below 7% of January’s output, according to the survey. Russia’s output is expected to drop below 7% of January’s output due to the coronavirus outbreak. The CDU-TEK data, it split output cuts into how Russia may disclose its compliance. Published December figures that showed Russia will be transparent about its Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak has insisted the exclusion isn’t a loophole, and exclude condensate from its quota. Russia largely failed to meet its obligations in December, the energy ministry said, reporting crude-only barrels a day. The nation was not far from only output by 298,000 barrels a day the CDU-TEK data, it split output cuts into how Russia may disclose its compliance. In December, the country successfully followed the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies to hold an emergency session in late March of the Druzhba oil pipeline and growing improvement in order to stabilise. "This virus is requiring more out of the group as the demand picture gets weaker, " said Rebecca Babin, a senior consultant with EnerCom Chicago. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called the virus an unprecedented public health threat. "People are looking at the ongoing weather and geological condi- tions in the temporary shutdown of the Druzhba oil pipeline and growing improvement in order to stabilise. "The country has been ramping up exports to markets in North America,丛林石油 said in an interview. "We are seeing a robust rebound, he said. "Prices may be set for a new export terminal in the future, thus reducing costs and increasing revenue for the country. OPEC’s January oil output plunges on new cuts and Libyan unrest

Bloomberg

OPEC’s January oil output plunges on new cuts and Libyan unrest

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Global gas and petrochemicals: The lagging trend

Bloomberg

Oil off to slowest start since ’91 on virus fear

Oil is off to the worst start to a year since 1991, tumbling 3% in January as concerns that the spread of coronavirus will curb de- mand for transportation fuel weighed. Futures fell 1.1% in New York on Friday, capping the worst month since May as investors were rattled by the virus not being a persistent event and leaving few signs of an economic rebound, he said. "Prices may be set for a new export terminal in the future, thus reducing costs and increasing revenue for the country. OPEC’s January oil output plunges on new cuts and Libyan unrest

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QBIC launches 3rd wave of Lean Acceleration Programme for high-potential startups

The Qatari Business Incubation Centre (QBIC), a division of Qatar Development Bank (QDB), announced the launch of the third wave of the Lean Acceleration Programme, which was designed to accelerate the growth of established and promising startups.

QBIC, said: “The Lean Acceleration Programme, which was designed for established and promising businesses, was established to stimulate existing businesses by stimulating established and promising startups that will boost the acceleration of Lean Startup Programme, which enables entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into viable businesses. In addition to this, QBIC offers various programmes, including their product development, offering, proof of concept, or operational excellence, and the ability to provide the programme.

The programme concludes with a Demo Day, which allows the best performing startups to pitch their businesses to prominent investors and stakeholders from Qatar and beyond, with the purpose of securing investments that will boost the acceleration of Lean Acceleration Programme. In addition to this, QBIC offers several other acceleration programmes, which cover the full business growth cycle. This includes the Rapidly Lean Startup Programme, which enables entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into viable businesses. In addition to this, QBIC offers various programmes, including their product development, offering, proof of concept, or operational excellence, and the ability to provide the programme.

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QBIC launched the 3rd wave of the Lean Acceleration Programme on January 20, in collaboration with the Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE), and the Qatar Financial Crimes Enforcement Department (QFCED). The programme is designed to accelerate the growth of established and promising startups.

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The yuan's drop below a key level amid concern over the economic impact of the coronavirus epidemic in making the dollar a clear winner in the race for global currencies,
People stand in front of a sculpture of bulls at the entrance to the Shanghai Stock Exchange building. China stocks overtook Japan to become the second largest market in the world on Thursday, as Beijing announced plans to increase share issuance to boost economic growth.

China's markets set for tumultuous return today

Bloomberg

Every other market has already reflected the deteriorating outlook in China's economy. So why can't the Chinese market repeat this? One concern is the limited liquidity in the Chinese market. The absence of derivatives makes it difficult for investors to react quickly. A hedge fund manager at one of the world's largest asset management firms says the Chinese government's efforts to increase share issuance may have a limited impact on the market. The government's lack of intervention is a cause for concern.

China's markets are expected to return to normalcy within a few days. The government has announced plans to increase share issuance to boost economic growth. The lack of derivatives makes it difficult for investors to react quickly. A hedge fund manager at one of the world's largest asset management firms says the Chinese government's efforts to increase share issuance may have a limited impact on the market. The government's lack of intervention is a cause for concern.

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Sovereignty comes first: Britain lays out tough stance for EU trade talks

Bloomberg

Britain laid out a tough, uncompromising stance for EU trade talks on Friday, Britain now must negotiate a new deal, saying it would set its own agenda and make sovereignty a key priority.

"The starting point is that you will have to do a lot more to avoid all of that, and I am sure they will have to do a lot under what we have been detailed; right across the autonomy," Vince Cable, Deputy Prime Minister and Business Secretary, said in a speech today. "Let's not set such rigid red lines that would instead purge our negotiations of possibility or hope." 

"Sovereignty comes first: we are taking back control of our trade policies and the economy," said Cable, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party.

"We are bringing forward the reform of the American-style free trade agreement, which handed us a large share in the level of access to its lucrative market. Ministers have been commenting on this, saying it would set its own agenda and do the same."

The issue of sovereignty is a major bone of contention for the UK, which left the EU in January and is now seeking to negotiate new trade deals with the bloc.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson wants to avoid all of that, and he is sure they will have to do a lot under what we have been detailed; right across the autonomy," Cable said in a speech today.

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Bloomberg

QuickTake Q&A

In the circular economy, it’s take, make, use, reuse

By Emma Vickers

New York

Take, make, use, dispose. For decades, this has been the standard operating procedure for our planet. Companies take raw materials and transform them into products, which are purchased by consumers, who ultimately throw them out, creating waste. But what if we change this pattern? What if we encourage people to start choosing the materials they consume more thoughtfully? What if we design products so that we don’t throw them away but instead keep them circulating? This is the idea behind the circular economy, a concept that is gaining traction around the world.

What is the circular economy?

The circular economy is an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the:use of finite resources by designing and organizing industries and societies to efficiently and effectively recycle all products, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. At the core of the circular economy is the idea of designing for longevity, where products are designed to last longer, be repaired and maintained, and then be reused or recycled.

Why is the circular economy important?

The circular economy is important because it addresses some of the most pressing issues facing our planet, such as climate change and resource depletion. By designing products and systems that are regenerative and restorative, we can reduce our reliance on finite resources, decrease our carbon footprint, and create a more sustainable future.

How does the circular economy work?

The circular economy works by designing products and systems with circularity in mind. This means designing products to be easily repairable, upgradable, and recyclable. Companies are encouraged to keep products in use for as long as possible, and when they are no longer needed, they should be reused or recycled to recover as much value as possible. This creates a virtuous cycle where products have multiple lives and contribute to the economy over time.

What are some examples of the circular economy in action?

There are many examples of the circular economy in action around the world. One example is the fashion industry, where companies are designing clothes that are durable, repairable, and recyclable. Another example is the electronics industry, where companies are designing products that are easy to upgrade and repair. And in the food industry, companies are designing systems that reduce food waste and encourage the reuse of food products.

What are the benefits of the circular economy?

The benefits of the circular economy include reducing waste, conserving resources, and creating new business opportunities. By designing for longevity and recycling, companies can create new markets and jobs, while reducing the environmental impact of their products.

What are the challenges of implementing the circular economy?

The challenges of implementing the circular economy include changing consumer behavior, developing new business models, and creating the necessary infrastructure for recycling.

How can individuals contribute to the circular economy?

Individuals can contribute to the circular economy by choosing to buy products that are designed for longevity, repairing and upgrading products instead of replacing them, and recycling products at the end of their life.

What is the future of the circular economy?

The future of the circular economy looks promising. As more companies and governments adopt the principles of circularity, we can expect to see a shift towards more sustainable and regenerative business models. This will require a major transformation of our current economic system, but it is a necessary step towards creating a more sustainable future for all.

Bloomberg

Morgan Stanley

Morgan Stanley shakes up top investment banking unit at centre of probe

Morgan Stanley overhauled leadership at a top investment banking unit at the center of a broad probe of Wall Street, replacing the head of its investment banking division with a colleague who had just been diagnosed with cancer and promoting a junior executive to oversee the five U.S. regional offices.

The moves come as Morgan Stanley faces scrutiny over its handling of a case involving possible price-fixing in a key market for trading bonds and other credit derivatives.

The bank said in a statement that it had appointed CFO Gabriel得er as head of its investment banking division, replacing Eileen blouse.

The move comes after the U.S. Department of Justice launched a broad investigation into whether companies engaged in illegal activity in the market for credit default swaps.

Morgan Stanley has been a focal point of the probe, with regulators and prosecutors looking into whether traders improperly valued bond-related instruments to disguise their losses.

The bank has said it is cooperating with the probes and has set aside $1.2 billion to cover potential fines.

The moves come as Morgan Stanley faces pressure to improve its performance in investment banking, where it has lagged behind some of its rivals.

The bank has struggled to compete with larger rivals in investment banking, which has been hit by a decrease in deal activity and declining fees.

The bank’s share price has fallen by more than 20% this year, putting it well below its同行水平.

The firm said it would announce a new strategy later this year, aiming to boost its investment banking division.

The bank has also been under pressure to improve its risk management practices, which have been criticized in the wake of the probe.

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Oil prices fall on rising crude inventories, virus fears

The market was concerned that the recent coronavirus outbreak will stymie oil demand in China. WTI closed the week at $55.50 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, down 2.4% from last week’s close, as the United States reported its first case of the virus on January 20. Meanwhile, Brent crude finished the week at $51.56 a barrel on the Intercontinental Exchange, down 2.8% from the previous week.

Crude inventories rose further this week, more than an expected 3.548mn barrels of crude oil inventories during the week, as the US Energy Information Administration reported on Wednesday a build of 0.482mn barrels, implying weaker demand and search for crude prices. Meanwhile, the US Dollar Index closed the week at the 99 level after testing 2019 highs. A higher rate makes the US-dollar-denominated oil less attractive to foreign buyers. Oil is rising to keep prices from slipping any more. The market expects OPEC to be in place to spur additional cuts of crude oil output when its next meeting comes around in February or March. However, analysts believe current market fundamentals have prevented any significant bullish run on oil prices and the market is in an April will study and decide on it within days, Finance Minister Muhammad Diab and Wazni 10 days ago. If they agreed to it, the circular will be published Dutch price data. Henry Hub spot prices were up nearly 1%, to $1.91 per mmBtu, while the front-month futures contract traded around $310 per mmBtu. The summer price on the Dutch gas hub fell to $3.28 per mmBtu on Friday, the lowest level for this period since at least 2008 when the oil price peaked.

Lebanon to decide on circular regulating bank-customer relationships

The Lebanese government has received a circular from the Central Bank of Lebanon to continue discussions on a ‘green’ banking law that would be aimed at regulating relationships between banks and their customers and will study and decide on it within days, Finance Minister Muhammad Diab and Wazni 10 days ago. If they agreed to it, the circular will be published. This article was supplied by the International Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development.

Qatar First Bank acquires ‘90 North’ corporate campus in Seattle for $117mn

Qatar First Bank’s (QFB) has completed the off-market acquisition of ‘90 North’, a 285,000 sq ft office campus located in Bellevue, Washington. The property is fully rented by two tenants, T-Mobile and Mindtree. This acquisition is QFB’s sixth operation in the US real estate market, offering investors access to international investment opportunities through its investment management platform.

We source and structure investment opportunities to cater to the increasing demand of local and international investors.

Our products help investors gain access to real estate markets such as Minnesota, T-Mobile, Nichols, REI, Amazon, Google, Facebook, Oracle, Costco, AT&T, and Boeing. It is worth mentioning that this product is offered on a private placement basis and potential clients an affinity to regulated requirements of QFC. QFB is the first independent Shari’ah-compliant bank established by the QFC Regulatory Authority (QFCRA) and a listed entity in the Qatar Stock Exchange.

**BENCHMARK CRUDE OIL PRICES**

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<th>Benchmark</th>
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**BENCHMARK GAS PRICES**

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<tr>
<td>North Asia LNG Spot</td>
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**Weekly Energy Market Review**

**Crude (WTI):** Brent (UK) finished the week at $56.00 a barrel, up 2.1% from last week’s close. WTI closed the week at $52.50 a barrel, down 2.4% from last week’s close.

**Natural Gas:** Henry Hub spot prices were up nearly 1%, to $1.91 per mmBtu, while the front-month futures contract traded around $310 per mmBtu. The summer price on the Dutch gas hub fell to $3.28 per mmBtu on Friday, the lowest level for this period since at least 2008 when the oil price peaked.

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