

## Taking Bahrain - Bosnia and Herzegovina tie to next level

● **Al-Hawaj to hold meeting of the Bahrain - Bosnia and Herzegovina Society**

TDT | Manama

The stage is set for Bahrain-Bosnia and Herzegovina to expand ties to new horizons in trade, tourism, real estate, industry, finance, banking and entrepreneurship, said Jawad Al Hawaj, the Chairman of Bahrain-Bosnia & Herzegovina Friendship and Business Society.

For this, we are holding a dinner meet tomorrow at Al Hawaj Garden for members of the society, business owners, investors, company representation and others to explore potential opportunities, said Al Hawaj.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Al Hawaj said, can serve as a gateway for Bahrainis to the Balkan countries and European countries. "Likewise, Bahrain is prepared to serve as a gateway for Bosnians to the Gulf countries and the Arab region."

Explaining, he said the Bahraini investments in Bosnia and Herzegovina had reached more than 200 million dollars. "This is expected to rise, as the ties will expand to more sectors including agriculture, mining, tourism, trade and services, financial and other important and pivotal sectors."



Jawad Al Hawaj, the Chairman of Bahrain-Bosnia & Herzegovina Friendship and Business Society

The Chairman also highlighted the role of the society in Gulf Air in establishing a direct air route between Bahrain and Bosnia, "where the frequencies will rise soon," he added.

In going forward, he said, "We are seriously working on overcoming the stalemate caused by the Corona pandemic, for which the government of Bahrain is playing a big role."

He further stressed that the Bahraini week in Bosnia would open up for Bahraini business owners several areas for cooperation. "Besides, we are planning to host a week for Bosnia in Bahrain to expand this further."

The society, he said, plans to hold joint meetings between entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium-sized enterprises in Bahrain and Bosnia in many fields and cultural and artistic activities.

## World stocks buoyant on upbeat earnings

● **Euro STOXX 600 up 0.3%**

● **UBS, financials lead more upbeat earnings**

● **China property sector worries still worry investors**

Reuters | London/Hong Kong

Shares made slim gains around the world on Tuesday, with upbeat corporate earnings buoying European shares and outweighing recurring worries about China's property sector.

The broad Euro STOXX 600 (.STOXX) hit its highest in seven weeks, adding 0.5%, with German stocks (.GDAXI) gaining 0.9%.

After a stellar quarter for U.S. and British banks, Switzerland's UBS (UBSG.S) rose over 2% on its highest quarterly profit since 2015, helping the financial services sector (.SXXF) climb about 1%.

Wall Street futures were up 0.3%, with the earnings season reaching its peak and tech heavyweights including Apple Inc (AAPL.O) and Alphabet (GOOG.L.O) due to report later.

Still, some analysts voiced caution over the impact of the



Representative picture (Courtesy of pips edge)

COVID-19 pandemic on supply chains.

"Even though this has been a good earnings season in aggregate we are starting to see more companies with supply backlogs, hiring difficulties, and rising input prices that are eating into profits," Deutsche Bank analysts wrote.

The MSCI world equity index (.MIWD000000PUS), which tracks shares in 50 countries, added 0.1%.

Asian stocks had earlier followed Wall Street's record highs overnight, before giving up their gains. Electric car maker Tesla Inc (TSLA.O) had boosted Wall Street after it joined the \$1 trillion market capitalisation club.

MSCI's gauge of Asia-Pacific stocks outside Japan (.MIAPJ000000PUS) was flat after briefly touching its highest in six weeks, following gains throughout October.

Weighing on the market were Chinese property stocks, which extended losses as another developer, Modern Land (1107.HK), defaulted on a payment, adding to worries about the effects of the debt crisis at China Evergrande Group (3333.HK).

Hong Kong-listed mainland property firms (.HSMPI) dropped 5% while the mainland CSI 300 Real Estate Index (.CSI000952) fell 2.8%.

China has said it will roll out a pilot real estate tax in some regions, adding to existing concerns about real estate.

The U.S. dollar index held at 93.932 - in between a one-year high of 94.563 hit earlier in the month and a one-month low of 93.483 on Monday.

Brent crude futures fell 0.4% to \$85.68 a barrel, while the U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures edged 0.01% higher to \$83.76 a barrel.

**Biden to announce up to \$102 m in funding for US-ASEAN partnership**



Reuters | Washington

U.S. President Joe Biden will announce plans to provide up to \$102 million to expand the US strategic partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) at a virtual summit with the 10-nation bloc on Tuesday, the White House said.

The US funding will go towards health, climate, economic and education programs, a White House factsheet said.

Of the total, \$40 m will go to an initiative to help address the current COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen ASEAN's ability to prevent, detect and respond to future outbreaks of infectious diseases, it said.

A further \$20.5 m will go to help tackle the climate crisis and up to \$20 m to support cooperation on trade and innovation. Another \$17.5 m is earmarked for education projects and \$4 m to promote gender equality and equity, it said.

Biden's participation in the virtual summit will mark the first time in four years that Washington will engage at the top level with a bloc that it sees as key to its strategy of pushing back against China.

## ICD – CIBAFI webinar puts focus on cryptocurrencies and Islamic Finance

TDT | Manama, Jeddah

The General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector joined forces for the second time this year for discussing "Cryptocurrencies – A Double-edged Sword: Challenges and Opportunities for Islamic Finance".

The webinar highlighted how cryptocurrencies could achieve financial inclusion and development, supporting the growth of the Islamic finance industry.

Ayman Sejiny, Chief Executive Officer of ICD, highlighted the opportunities that blockchain-driven applications can bring to the development agenda, including the promotion of financial inclusion and the growth of the Islamic finance



Participants during the webinar

industry in particular.

Sejiny said that shariah-compliant adaptation of cryptocurrencies would be, remarkably, a milestone in the Islamic Finance

industry."

He said the ICD had built a FinTech platform to offer blockchain driven financial services for usually unbanked and under-

served individuals and small and medium-sized enterprises. "ICD will continue exploring practical shariah compliance opportunities to enhance its FinTech platform with smart sukuks issuance, asset tokenization, zakat and Sadaqah collection for development purposes" he added.

Dr Abdelilah Belatik, Secretary-General of CIBAFI, said: "We are pleased to collaborate for the second time with ICD to highlight how cryptocurrencies can be embraced and supported for the growth of Islamic finance".

"In the same context, CIBAFI, in support of these advancements, have recently established an Innovation and Technology Working Group (ITWG). This group will conduct various initiatives to strengthen the adop-

tion of financial technologies within the Islamic financial services industry. These initiatives include encouraging innovation and product development activities in line with the industry developments and Shariah objective, among many others".

**Two panel sessions**

The webinar included two-panel sessions. The first focused on the effects that the emergence of cryptocurrencies has on the financial system and the regulatory interventions by central banks.

The second session highlighted how to embrace cryptocurrencies for the growth of Islamic finance. Rachid Ettaai, a Senior Research Analyst at the General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions, moderated the sessions.

**Aoun urges to resume meetings**



Reuters | Cairo

Lebanese President Michel Aoun yesterday urged the government to resume meetings in order to reach an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Aoun also rejected political interference in the investigation into the Beirut blast, he said in a tweet.

## AIIB to fully align with Paris agreement by mid-2023

● **Currently projects USD50 billion investment for climate finance by 2030**

TDT | Beijing

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank announced that it will align its operations with the goals of the Paris Agreement by July 1, 2023.

The Bank currently estimates its cumulative climate finance

approvals to be USD50 billion by 2030. This amount would represent a fourfold increase in annual climate finance commitments since AIIB started publicly reporting the number in 2019.

Earlier this year, AIIB announced it would target at least a 50% share of climate finance in actual financing approvals by 2025. Today's announcement marks an important step towards achieving this goal.

"We are at a defining moment in history—one which calls for bold, fast and wide-ranging collective action if we are to limit

global warming and protect our fragile planet," said Jin Liqun, President and Chair of the Board of Directors at AIIB. "Today's announcement reinforces AIIB's long-standing pledge to support climate action in line with the Paris Agreement. We think the way forward needs greater participation by the private sector on all fronts, so that we can collectively deliver on the promise of building an inclusive, equitable and sustainable future."

Speaking at a press conference on the sidelines of the 2021 AIIB Annual Meeting hosted by the

United Arab Emirates, President Jin said enhancing investments in adaptation and resilience for low-income members and fostering emerging technologies to drive action on climate change are key focus areas.

The Paris Alignment commitment would apply to sovereign and nonsovereign projects, including investments made via financial intermediaries.

AIIB is currently testing a rigorous process to ensure projects meet low-carbon and climate-resilient standards consistent with the Paris accord.

The approach draws on the international standards and frameworks currently being developed in collaboration with other multilateral development banks.

An expanded focus on adaptation and resilience will complement the Bank's ambitious target of having climate finance represent 50% of AIIB's financing approvals by 2025. Climate finance accounted for 41% of the Bank's infrastructure portfolio in 2020.

"There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Properly funding adaptation recognizes that this

work may require fundamental shifts in infrastructure and our behavior. Flood walls, improved building standards, resilient infrastructure are all tools we have at our disposal. But access to funds to implement these measures is vital, especially in developing countries," President Jin said.

Annual resilience costs in developing countries alone are estimated to be USD140-300 billion in 2030. Today, resilience finance stands at a mere USD30 billion, according to the United Nations.