

AM Best affirms GIG Gulf’s financial strength rating of **A (Excellent)** for 5th Consecutive Year

Manama

GIG Gulf, part of Gulf Insurance Group K.S.C.P., yesterday announced that AM Best has affirmed its Financial Strength Rating (FSR) of A (Excellent) and Long-Term Issuer Credit Rating (ICR) of “a+” (Excellent), which marks the fifth consecutive year that GIG Gulf has maintained its A (Excellent) rating with no changes compared to last year’s assessment. The outlook for both ratings remains stable, confirming our robust financial position.

GIG Gulf’s established presence in the region is a key differentiator. The company ranks among the top five insurers in its core markets, with presence in Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Additionally, GIG Gulf holds a 50% stake in Gulf Insurance Group (a Saudi Joint Stock Company) in Saudi Arabia, further reinforcing its diversification and ability to offer compliant solutions across the region.

The affirmation reflects GIG Gulf’s financial stability and considers the strategic importance of GIG Gulf as a key subsidiary of the Gulf Insurance Group (GIG Group



K.S.C.P.), which holds a Financial Strength Rating of “A” (Excellent) and a Long-Term Issuer Credit Rating of “a+” (Excellent) with a stable outlook from AM Best. GIG Gulf also benefits from shared capabilities, including Risk Manage-

ment, actuarial, investment management, as well as global best practice. The collective strength of our companies enables our local leadership teams to be empowered to deliver on the ground, with greater agility, to the needs of local

markets.

Together, these strengths provide customers, regulators, and partners with confidence in the Group’s long-term stability and ability to meet its commitments, reinforcing GIG’s position as one of the most credible and trusted insurance providers in the Middle East and North Africa.

GIG’s ratings also consider the strategic importance of GIG to its ultimate parent company, Fairfax Financial Holding Limited (Fairfax). Fairfax is a globally diversified insurer and reinsurer with established presence in over 40 countries and one of the Top 20 P&C companies in the world.

Paul Adamson, CEO of GIG Gulf, commented:

“We are proud to once again receive this strong endorsement from AM Best. The affirmation of our ‘A’ rating is a testament to GIG Gulf’s clear focus on profitability, a disciplined approach to



risk, strong internal governance, and a growing regional presence. GIG Gulf is well-positioned to keep thriving in the Middle East’s dynamic insurance market. The ratings reinforce our commitment to delivering sustainable growth and long-term value for our customers, partners, and shareholders across the region.”

Stocks extend record run as trade, AI dominates

● The Dow briefly topped 48,000 points as all three of Wall Street’s main indices set record highs

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Stock markets hit record highs yesterday thanks to optimism over US trade deals, the AI sector and an expected interest-rate cut by the US Federal Reserve.

The Dow briefly topped 48,000 points as all three of Wall Street’s main indices set record highs when trading started, following fresh peaks set in London and some Asian markets as US President Donald Trump voiced optimism on the eve of crunch talks with China’s President Xi Jinping.

Investors are heading ahead to a meeting of the Federal Reserve, which observers expect will unveil a quarter-percentage-point cut to borrowing costs, as well as earnings reports from tech giants Meta, Microsoft and Google-parent Alphabet after trading closes in New York.

“Sentiment is as bullish as it can be heading into what could be one of the most consequential two-day periods for markets this quarter,” said City Index

Key figures at around 1630 GMT		
New York - Dow:	▲ 0.6% at 47,980.63 points	
New York - S&P 500:	▲ 0.3% at 6,907.35	
Nasdaq Composite:	▲ 0.5% at 23,952.23	
London - FTSE 100:	▲ 0.6% at 9,756.14 (close)	
Paris - CAC 40:	▼ 0.2% at 8,200.88 (close)	
Frankfurt - DAX:	▼ 0.6 at 24,124.21 (close)	
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 2.2% at 51,307.65 (close)	
Hang Seng Index: Closed for a holiday		
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 0.7% at 4,016.33 (close)	
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.1662 from \$1.1656 on Tuesday	
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.3238 from \$1.3336	
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 152.07 yen from 152.06 yen	
Euro/pound:	▲ at 88.10 from 87.80 pence	
Brent North Sea Crude:	▲ 1.2 percent at \$64.62 per barrel	
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 1.3% at \$60.93 per barrel	

and FOREX.com analyst Fawad Razaqada.

The European Central Bank and the Bank of Japan are expected to hold interest rates steady this week.

Ahead of meeting Xi, Trump indicated that a trade deal had been reached with South Korea’s President Lee Jae Myung.

Ahead of his arrival in South Korea, Trump told reporters he expects “a lot of problems are going to be solved” during his first in-person discussion with Xi since returning to the White House this year.

The two leaders are set to meet Thursday in Busan, a

southern port city not far from the APEC summit attended by Trump.

Geopolitical hopes have added to an already jubilant atmosphere on Wall Street, with artificial intelligence giant Nvidia in particular benefitting from comments by Trump that fuelled speculation it might be allowed to sell chips in China.

Trump’s “remarks sent Nvidia soaring to a \$5 trillion company and propelled the S&P 500, Nasdaq 100 and Dow Jones to new record levels,” said Razaqada.

“In a market already high on AI-fuelled enthusiasm, that was all investors needed to keep the

rally going,” he added.

After gaining 5% on Tuesday, Nvidia shares rose further on Wednesday, helping it to become the world’s first company with a market capitalisation of \$5 trillion.

Record highs

Benchmark stocks indices in Tokyo and Seoul each reached record highs Wednesday.

After Seoul closed, the United States and South Korea reached an agreement to maintain reciprocal tariffs at 15% and to reduce levies on automobiles and auto parts.

Taipei gained more than 1% on the day and Shanghai tracked moderate gains, while Hong Kong was closed for a public holiday.

In company news, shares in UK drugmaker GSK rose more than 2% in London after it raised its full-year guidance on strong sales growth.

Shares in Mercedes-Benz rose more than four percent after the company reassured investors it faced no immediate production shutdowns due to microchip shortages, even though third-quarter net profits plunged more than 30% due to Trump’s tariff blitz as well as slumping sales in China.

The price of copper reached a record high Wednesday, with the metal boosted also by tight supply concerns.

Saudi wealth fund to hit \$1tn, NEOM still priority: chief

AFP | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia’s futuristic new city NEOM remains a priority for the Gulf kingdom’s sovereign wealth fund under its new five-year plan, its chief said yesterday, following speculation about the project’s future.

NEOM, the \$500 billion flagship for oil-reliant Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 diversification programme, has reportedly been plagued by delays, personnel changes and design rethinks.

Yasir Al-Rumayyan, governor of the Public Investment Fund (PIF), said there would be six areas of focus, or “ecosystems”, from 2026 to 2030, including tourism, urban development, innovation, clean energy and industry.

NEOM will be “its own ecosystem”, Rumayyan told business and political leaders at the Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh.

“This (plan) would help us in prioritising our capital deployment with the timelines,” he said. “We don’t want to go to every investment with the same priority.”

He added that PIF should hit \$1 trillion in assets under management by the end of this year. “We’re very, very close to getting there,” Rumayyan said.

NEOM was the only one of the Saudi “gigaprojects” -- major lifestyle developments, which also include a Red Sea tourism project and Qiddiya,

an entertainment city near Riyadh -- named in the plan.

Reported problems at NEOM include a scaling-back of The Line, originally intended to be a mirrored pair of parallel skyscrapers as tall as New York’s Empire State Building and originally designed to stretch for tens of kilometres through the desert.

Difficulties have also been reported at Trojena, the ski resort being built nearby whose scheduled hosting of the 2029 Asian Winter Games drew protests from environmentalists.

PIF’s new, more streamlined plan came after it spent billions in recent years funding around 100 companies dealing in everything from AI to camel-milk products, Rumayyan said.

The fund is a main driver of attempts by the world’s biggest oil exporter to diversify its economy into areas such as tourism, business and finance.

YOU
KNOW WHAT

NEOM, Saudi Arabia’s \$500 billion megacity project, is designed to be powered entirely by renewable energy and aims to host over 9 million residents in its futuristic linear city called The Line, which will stretch 170 kilometres across the desert.