“The Age of Electricity Beckons”: Presentation at ABB Channel Partners event, 29 January 2025

Dr. Nasser Saidi’s joined as a keynote speaker at the ABB Channel Partners Event on 29th of January 2025, with a presentation titled “The Age of Electricity Beckons“.

The presentation touched upon the ongoing global economic-geo-political fragmentation, how costly it would be given it accelerates deglobalisation while also touching on the Trump Presidency and potential impact on the MENA region. Regional implications was analysed with a view that the GCC can benefit from global fragmentation via increasingly diversified,integrated & globally connected economies, emerging as “Middle Powers”. The presentation focused on the challenges of climate change and energy transition in the MENA region, underscoring the fact that tech deployment is critical for energy transition.

A press release of the event quotes Dr. Saidi:

“Climate change is the name of the game,” said Dr Saidi, President of Nasser Saidi & Associates and guest speaker of the event. “Private and public fundings need to be mobilized to accelerate investment in and development of renewable energy and climate technology across the region, one of the most climate stressed globally.

”

Comments on PetroYuan & GCC commitments to energy transition in Energy Intelligence, Nov 2024

Dr. Nasser Saidi's comments on the PetroYuan appeared in an article titled "[Oil Dollar Pricing Seen Staying, But New Payment Modes Emerging]()" in Energy Intelligence, published on 8th November 2024. The comments are posted below.

Nasser Saidi, president of Nasser Saidi & Associates, an economic advisory and business consultancy and founder of the Clean Energy Business Council Mena, believes alternatives are *no longer pipedreams.*

"As geo-eco-political tensions increase and global economic and trade fragmentation increases as a result of Cold War II, we will witness the growth of the PetroYuan for financing China's O&G with its major oil exporters, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other GCC countries," he told Energy Intelligence.

He cited reports of Indian oil refiners making payments in rupees for purchase of crude oil from the UAE under the 'local currency settlement' system agreed upon by the two countries. More importantly than India, which is the world's third-largest oil importer, are oil exporters, including Russia, Iraq and Indonesia that have accepted the yuan as payment for crude oil shipments, Saidi said. In 2023, there were 12 major commodity contracts that were settled in non-US dollar currencies.

Saidi doesn't believe pricing oil in other currencies will be an immediate move and he foresees the emergence of an Asian yuan zone as China increasingly integrates Asian countries into its supply chain. However, as trade and investment sanctions are ratcheted up and the dollar is increasingly weaponized, for example by freezing of Russian US dollar and euro dominated assets, "countries will be encouraged to develop new payment mechanisms that could challenge the dominance of the dollar," he said.

This could be in the form of adopting the yuan for trade, with the PetroYuan being used both for energy and non-oil trade payments, and settlement, he added. Other options include the extension of the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (Cips), an alternative to Swift, and arranging central bank digital currency (Cbdc) transfers that facilitate cross-border flows such as the successful collaborative effort mBridge. While the Brics bloc announced plans for Brics Bridge, a digital currency cross-border payment solution, as an alternative to the dollar, Saidi said "there is a long while before it *becomes operational and/or widely used."*

In a separate article titled "[Decarbonization Still in Focus Despite Mideast Geopolitics]", dated 13th Nov 2024, comments on GCC's energy transition efforts were mentioned. Comments are posted below.

To date, Mideast countries don't appear to have wavered from their commitments towards the energy transition, said Nasser Saidi, president of Nasser Saidi & Associates, an economic advisory and business consultancy, and founder of the Clean Energy Business Council Mena. "For now, regional geopolitics has had a limited impact on various commitments to energy transition," Saidi told Energy Intelligence. "However, should funds need to be diverted to increased security and military spending, there would be a delaying impact."

The implementation of decarbonization and energy transition strategies are inevitable for countries of the region and will buttress their diversification efforts, Saidi said. It will also help them create new export industries and products like hydrogen, attract foreign investment, and create jobs associated with the green economy and climate risk mitigation and adaptation technologies, he added.

"The Gulf superstorm is a

climate change omen”, Op-ed in Arabian Gulf Business Insight (AGBI), 6 May 2024

The opinion piece titled “The Gulf superstorm is a climate change omen” appeared in the Arabian Gulf Business Insight (AGBI) on 6th May 2024.

The article is posted below.

The Gulf superstorm is a climate change omen

As GCC nations diversify their economies, it is critical that new policies are green by design

Climate change is increasing the frequency of extreme weather events. That much is clear as superstorms wash over Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, unleashing unprecedented levels of rainfall and high winds.

Dubai received more than 250mm of rain in one day last month, compared to its standard 140mm per year. The resulting floods overwhelmed infrastructure – roads, shopping malls and public spaces – severely disrupting local life and economic activity.

The floods also disrupted flights at Dubai International Airport, which fortunately proved resilient and was functioning two days after the rains. The government's disaster recovery response, including Dubai Municipality deploying 2,500 workers to address emergencies, allowed the city to return to normality a few days later. Since then, the UAE has set AED 2 billion ($545 million) aside to pay for and rebuild flood-damaged homes, in addition to announcing an AED 80 billion drainage system as part of Dubai Economic Agenda D33.

So, what lessons can be learned from the storm?

The growing costs and risks of climate change require urgent action from both the public and private sectors.

In the Mena region, all countries aside from Libya and Yemen (given political issues) have submitted their nationally determined contributions reports, while only Kuwait and Palestine have submitted national adaptation plans to the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Developing national frameworks means that both climate adaptation and climate risk mitigation policies must be implemented, along with supporting investments.

Extreme weather events and higher reinsurance costs lead to increased insurance premiums for consumers. Insured global losses from natural disasters totalled $95 billion in 2023. National adaptation plans lower the cost of insurance by increasing public awareness and providing accurate data on climate-related events and vulnerabilities.

In the Middle East and Central Asia region, the International Monetary Fund believes that climate adaptation and strengthening infrastructure resilience will require an annual investment of around 1.6 percent of GDP (roughly $80 billion in 2021).

Furthermore, the agency estimates the cost of enhancing private asset resilience at around 0.5 percent of GDP. These expenses are over and above the estimated annual $250 billion to $310 billion needed to mitigate climate change.

To add to these concerns, those nations with greater financing needs are also the ones least prepared, either due to fiscal limitations, high debt burdens or weak financial development.

Climate change requires businesses to redesign their risk management plans and tools. Are business continuity and business disaster recovery plans climate resilient? Extreme climate events can lead to a reduction in revenue or potential bankruptcy.

BloombergNEF, a research organisation, found that 65 percent of more than 2,000 companies failed to identify assets and operations that may be vulnerable to physical risks. Even fewer companies conduct financial assessments of climate-related risks.

> *Climate risk should be measured and priced. The physical risks are growing and could result in loan and balance sheet losses for banks*

Businesses are also vulnerable to climate-related legal risks. Currently more than 2,500 climate lawsuits are recorded globally. About 55 percent of the 549 lawsuits outside the US have had a climate-positive ruling, according to the London School of Economics.

Climate risk, which encompasses physical and energy transition risks linked to climate change, should be measured and priced. The physical risks are growing and could result in loan and balance sheet losses for banks. Often, the damage is under-reported.

The Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures is pushing corporations to increase exposure reporting. Climate risk pricing should be required by central banks and financial regulators and translated into risk-based financing and loans.

The GCC countries are currently deploying industrial policies to support economic diversification. It is critical that these policies are green by design and imbued with climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

Climate risk mitigation includes energy transition investment and fossil fuel asset de-risking, focused on clean energy, electric mobility, carbon capture and storage and clean tech. These innovations can be private sector-driven.

There are many ways to build climate-resilient infrastructure: through public investment, public-private partnerships, or market-based private sector incentives (such as carbon pricing).

Examples include green hydrogen, solar-powered desalination and district cooling. The GCC already has a comparative advantage in these exportable technologies.

The Gulf states are also applying artificial intelligence to climate action. Abu Dhabi’s G42 developed Jais Climate, the world’s first bilingual large language model dedicated to climate and sustainability, “to inform, inspire and drive awareness about climate change and sustainability”.

AI and machine learning enable complex and multi-dimensional data to be handled more adeptly, which lends itself to climate economy modelling and the forecasting of effective action to help combat climate change.

Climate adaptation, energy transition and green economy policies will drive growth in renewable energy and clean technologies and trade. They can play a critical role in transforming the oil-producing economies and output structures.

Dr Nasser Saidi is the president of Nasser Saidi and

Associates. He was formerly chief economist and head of external relations at the DIFC Authority, Lebanon's economy minister and a vice-governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon

---

"A New Global Energy Map: On the Road to COP28", Presentation at the 10th CEBC Annual Summit, 31 Jan 2023

The presentation titled "A New Global Energy Map: On the Road to COP28", was given by Dr. Nasser Saidi as the opening keynote address at the 10th CEBC Annual Summit held in Dubai on 31st January 2023.

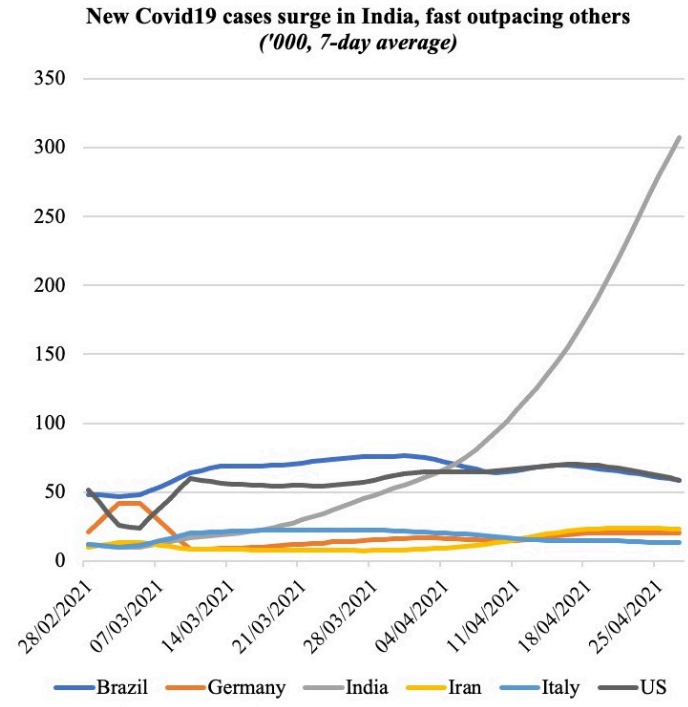
In his speech, Dr. Nasser Saidi, in his capacity as Chairman of the Clean Energy Business Council, spoke about the emergence of a new global energy map, its financing requirements as well as deep-dived into the energy transition in the GCC region & combating climate change.

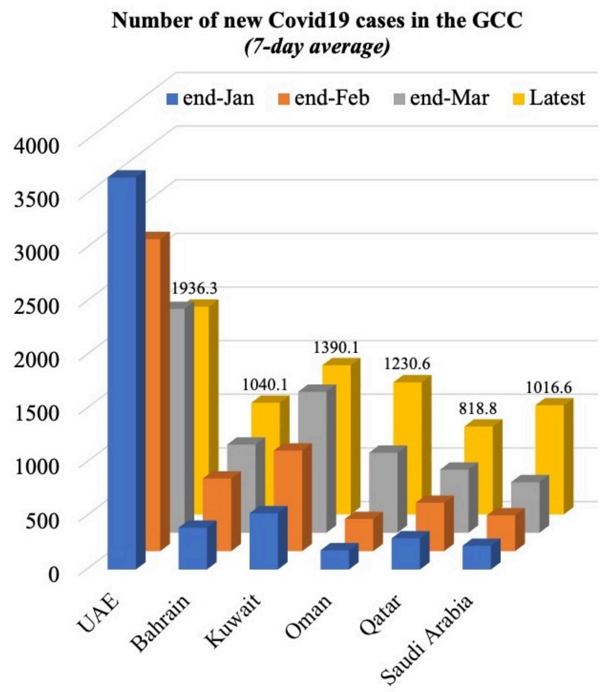
Weekly Insights 29 Apr 2021: India's exponential rise in

Covid19 cases – spillovers into the UAE?

Download a PDF copy of this week's insight piece [here](#).

1. As cases continue to surge in India, pace of global recovery comes into question





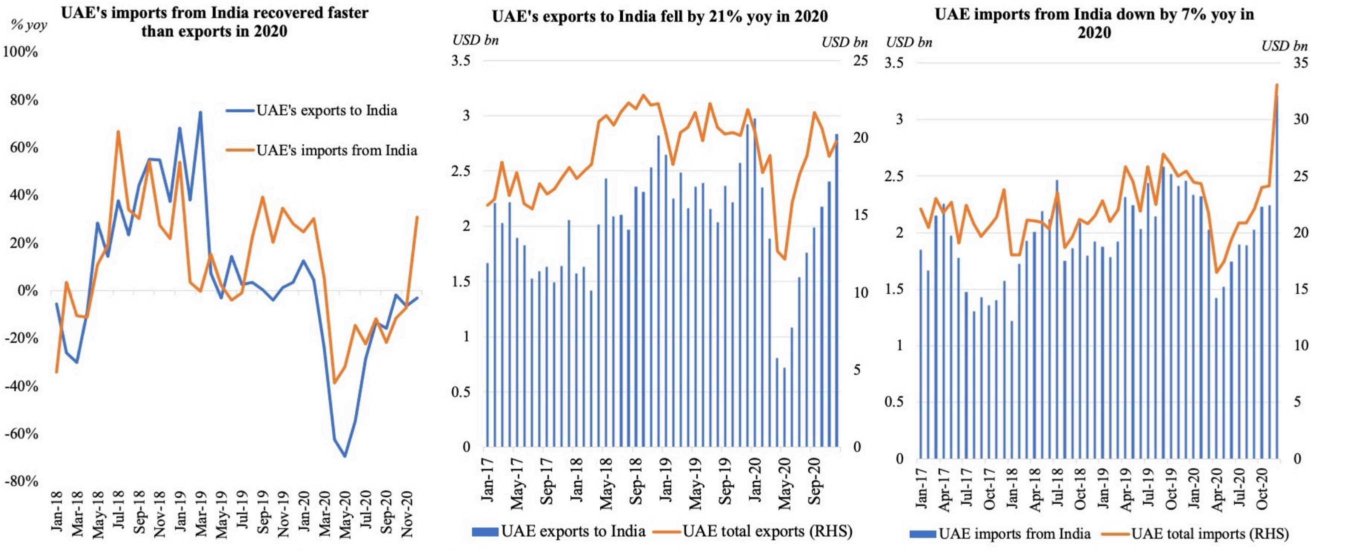
Source: Our World in Data. Chart created by Nasser Saidi & Associates

- **India reported the highest-ever single day cases on Wednesday, at 379,257 & continues to account for almost half the rise in global Covid19 cases.** Concerns about the accuracy of these statistics notwithstanding, it is worrisome that more than 20% of tests are coming positive and that the crumbling healthcare infrastructure (in many states) is leading to around 3k deaths per day!
- **Given India's linkages with the global economy** (trade, labour & investment flows), **it is not surprising that emergency supplies are coming in from across the globe to contain the spread**; US relaxed its previous ban on exports of raw materials for vaccines.
- Meanwhile, **GCC nations (except the UAE) have seen a**

steady uptick in cases from the beginning of this year; UAE's numbers though are still the highest among the lot. In terms of **new cases per million, Bahrain stands the highest (611) and Saudi Arabia the least (29)**, with Kuwait (326), Qatar (284), Oman (241) and the UAE (196) in between.

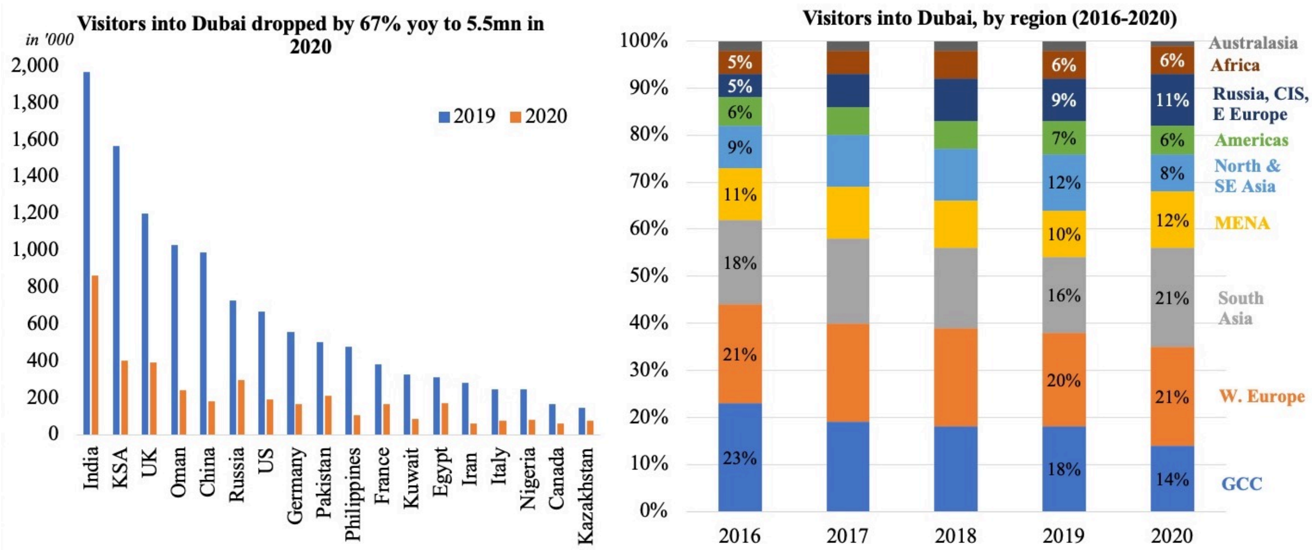
2. India-UAE links: Trade & Investment

- **UAE has developed strong links with Asia, and especially India**, over time. A prolonged slowdown in the Indian economy is likely to spillover into UAE's growth.
- First off, trade links: **bilateral trade was around USD 60bn in 2019**, though the Covid19 pandemic saw a decline in trade to USD 41.9bn (-30% yoy). Imports from India recovered much faster than exports into the country after the slump during lockdowns last year. India was the UAE's second-largest trading partner (after China) during pre-Covid times.
- While **oil is a key traded commodity** – about 8% of India's oil imports are from the UAE – exports of precious metals, stones and jewelry remain significant. Indian food imports also have a significant part to play in UAE's food consumption.
- **A slowdown in India would hence affect trade significantly**: **oil demand** will decline with lower mobility; **higher cases would lead to lower economic activity** – i.e. negative impact on industrial production lowers exports of textiles, machinery products, lower levels of agricultural production implies less food imports from the country.
- Official figures for **Indian investment in UAE** are not available: the Indian Embassy estimates it at around USD 85bn.



Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics. Charts created by Nasser Saidi & Associates

3. India-UAE links: Tourism

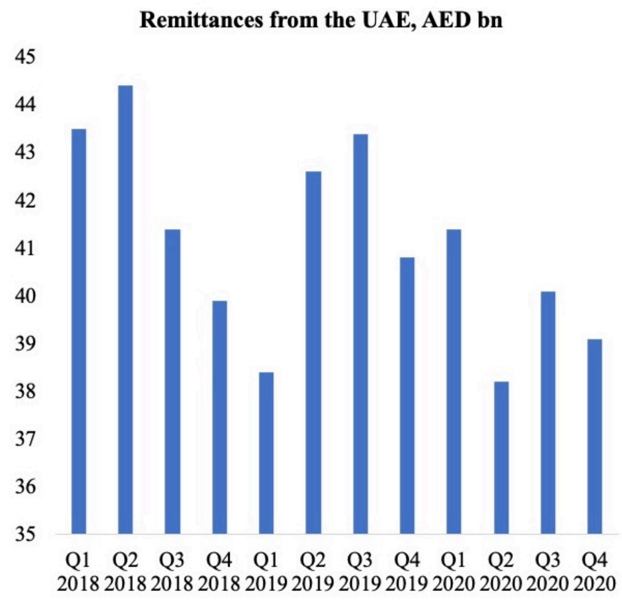


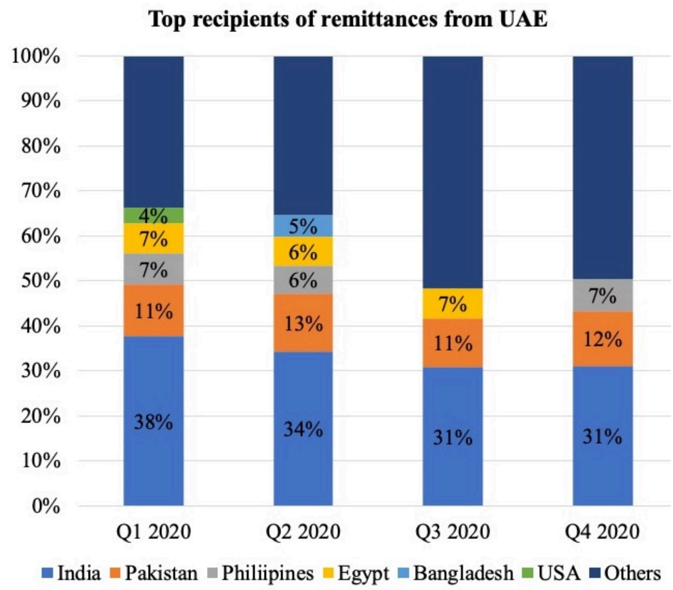
Source: Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing. Charts by Nasser Saidi & Associates

- Prior to the Covid19 epidemic, **India was the largest source market for visitors into Dubai, attracting 1.97mn visitors out of a total 16.73mn.**
- Covid19 cut short most tourist travel for a significantly large part of the year, resulting in a 67% decline in tourists into Dubai. **India was still the largest source market for Dubai in 2020** – attracting 865k persons (-56% yoy) and South Asia retained its top spot as the largest source of visitors (21% of total).
- **Flights to the Indian sub-continent have been suspended since Apr 25 for 10 days**, and given the exponential rise in cases in India, an extension seems likely – about **300**

commercial flights operated weekly in what is one of the busiest international travel corridors. Newspaper reports suggest an uptick in enquiries for private jets to ferry stranded residents (similar to the lockdowns last year). Cargo operations are carrying on uninterrupted.

4. India-UAE links: Remittances

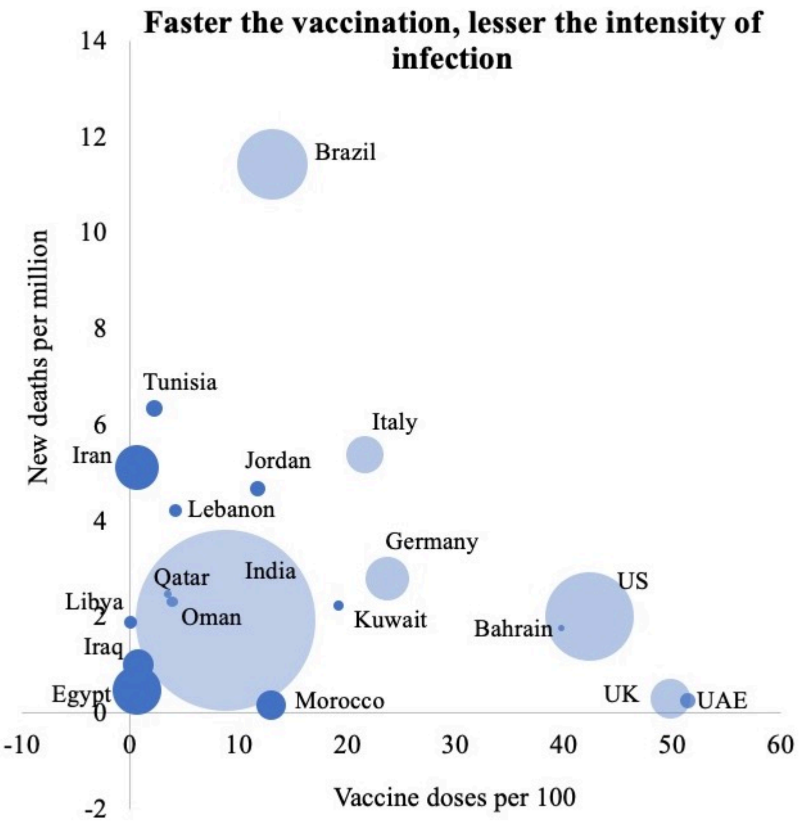




Source: UAE Central Bank. Charts by Nasser Saidi & Associates

- The **UAE-India migration corridor is one of the largest in Asia**: it stood at close to 3.5mn migrants in 2019. (Source: UN World Migration Report 2020). Indians account for around one-third of UAE's total population.
- **In 2020, total remittances from the UAE touched a total of USD 43.2bn** (-4% yoy). While Q1 saw a 7.8% uptick in remittances, Q2 saw the sharpest drop of 10.3%.
- **Remittances to India accounted for 33.5% of its total remittances last year** – maintaining its spot as the largest recipient of remittances from the UAE.
- As India goes into lockdown, it is possible that **UAE will see an increase in remittances to the country** as financial support for families in need. **A weaker Indian rupee would further suport this pattern.**

5. The economic case for vaccination



Source: Our World in Data. Chart created by Nasser Saidi & Associates
Bubble size denotes size of the population

- The discovery of vaccines for Covid19 had brought a sense of consumer and business optimism. However, **with vaccine distributions underway, its pace is less than heartening in many nations.**
- **Israel and UAE have topped the lists in terms of vaccination rates.** There is confirming evidence from Israel of reduced transmissions as a result of the inoculations.
- As the chart on the right (focusing on MENA nations) shows, there is a **negative correlation between vaccination and infection rates.** Anecdotal evidence also suggests that an infection after the first dose of vaccine is much less likely to require hospitalization.
- **Unfortunately for India, the pace of vaccination has been very slow.** Less than 10% of the nation's residents received the vaccine, in spite of it being home to the world's largest vaccine manufacturer (the Serum Institute).

- **The rapid pace of India's infections also calls into question its vaccine production and distribution channels**: the Serum Institute has not fulfilled its commitment to supply the AstraZeneca vaccine globally (to UK, EU and Covax), but is also planning to sell the vaccine to state governments and private hospitals in the country (at higher rates).
- In the MENA region, new deaths per million are low in the UAE (the leader in vaccine doses per 100 persons) while Iran has a long way to go. If Israel's results are to be emulated, **a coordinated effort should be underway to accelerate the pace of vaccination, resulting in faster return to higher economic activity**.

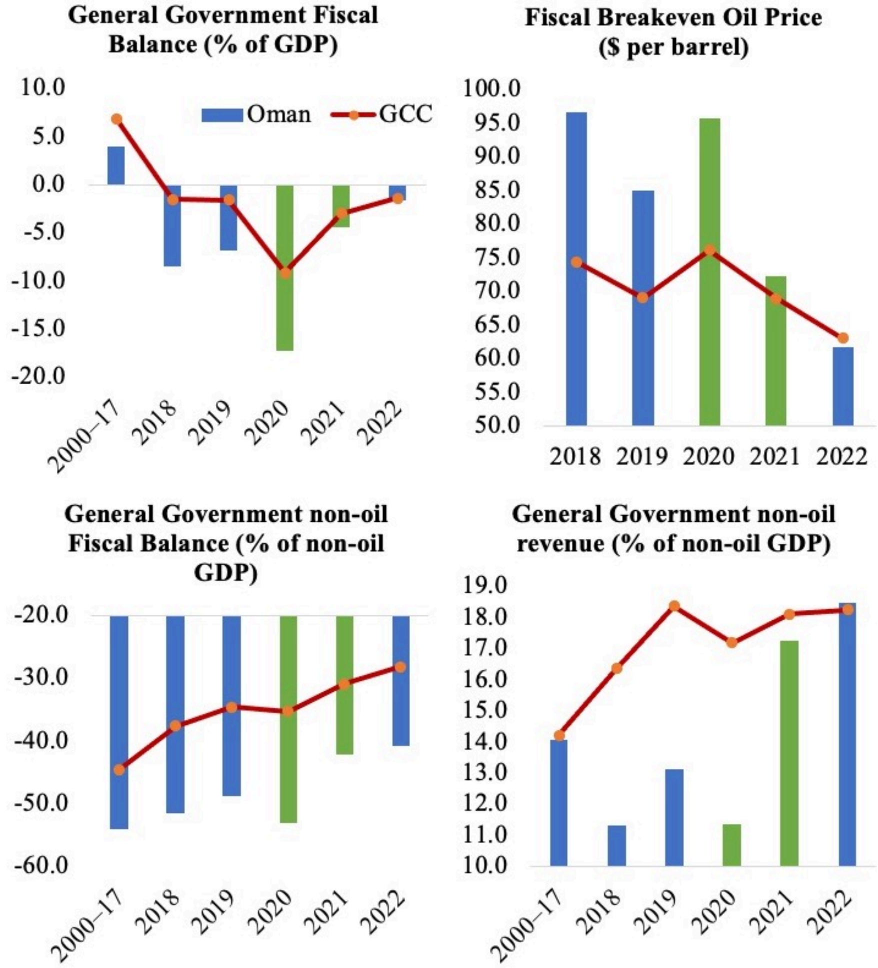
Powered by:

REFINITIV™

Weekly Insights 22 Apr 2021: GCC: Oil-dependence & Path to Climate Resilience

Download a PDF copy of this week's insight piece here.

1. Oman: 4th GCC nation to implement VAT



Source: IMF Regional Economic Outlook, Apr 2021

- **Oman introduced 5% VAT** on most goods and services, **starting Apr 16**
- UAE and Saudi Arabia rolled out 5% VAT in 2018 & Bahrain in 2019
- According to Ministry of Finance estimates, **Saudi increased non-oil tax revenues to 32% in 2018** (vs just 10% in 2010), 36% in 2019 and estimated to rise to 46% in 2020 (given tripling of VAT)
- **UAE** collected AED 27bn in VAT in 2018 (1st year) & AED 11.6bn in Jan-Aug 2020 (pandemic year); **VAT revenues in Bahrain** touched BHD 260mn in 2019 and BHD 220mn in 2020.
- Oman's VAT is estimated to **generate** ~OMR 400mn (**USD 1bn**) **in revenue** annually, roughly ~1.5% of GDP (if effectively and efficiently implemented)
- As a result, the IMF projects **fiscal deficit to decline** to 4.5% of GDP in 2021 (2020: 17.5%) & **non-oil revenue to rise** to 17.2% of non-oil GDP in 2021 (2020: 11.4%)

- **This move will lead to** an improvement of Oman's sovereign credit rating + lower the cost of credit + attract more FDI & portfolio investment as a result of the ensuing reduction in macroeconomic risks

2. GCC's Diversification Efforts & Renewable Energy policies => Transition to a lower-oil dependent region

- **Unsustainable path of dependence on oil**: current oil demand vs supply, pressure on oil prices + current fiscal & social spending policies => fiscal unsustainability: GCC's aggregate net financial wealth (est. at $2trn) could be depleted by 2034 (IMF)
- **Oil market structure & dynamics are changing**, given global energy transitions: pre-Covid19, shale & renewables were already displacing conventional oil
- Major **challenges** for the oil market *(non-exhaustive list)*:

–**Demand-side factors:**

  - Gov't plans for sustainable recovery, ambitious **goals for net-zero emissions**
  - **Covid19-led collapse in demand**: potential WFH policies & mobility, question marks over recovery of business/ leisure air travel
  - Energy efficiency improvements, EV penetration

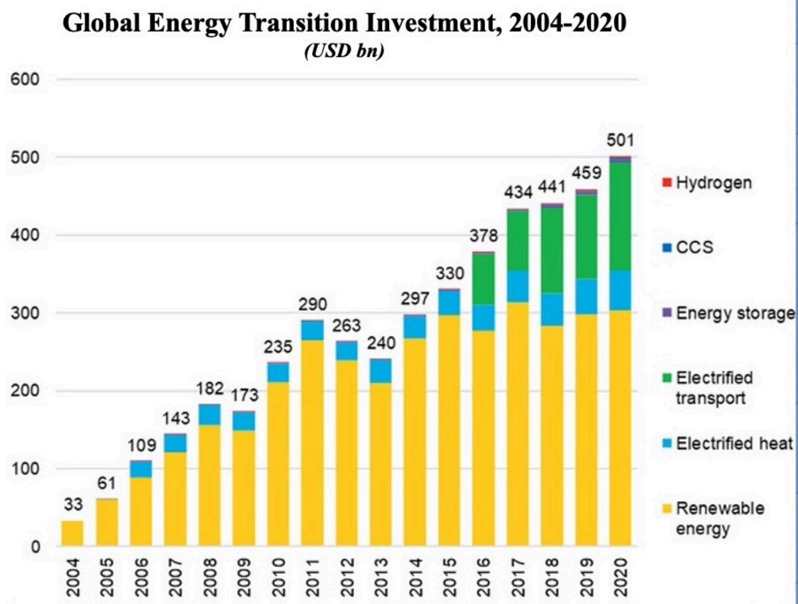
–**Supply-side factors**:

  - Spending cuts and project delays could slow oil supply growth
  - Large cost reductions in renewables + advances in digital technologies

- **Climate Change & Decarbonisation Risks are growing –** could lead to sharp fall in fossil fuel asset prices => stranded assets risk

3. Energy Transitions & GCC's ambitious targets

- The two-day virtual Leaders Summit on Climate (from today), hosted by the US President, brings the US back into play with respect to global action against climate change
- Latest news that banks & financial institutions with USD 70trn+ assets pledged to cut their greenhouse gas emissions & ensure their investment portfolios align with the science on the climate adds to the commitment



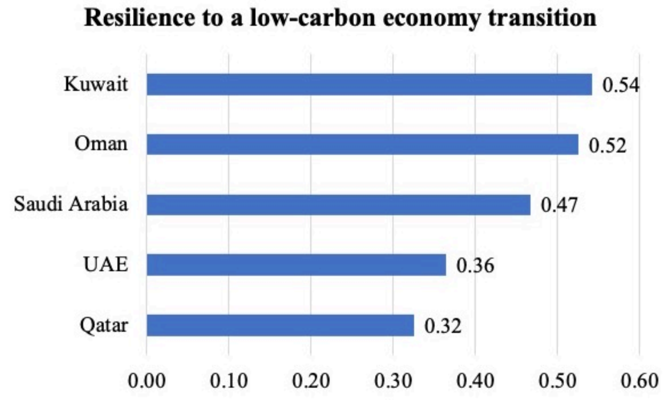
Source: Energy Transition Investment Trends, BNEF, Jan 2021
https://about.bnef.com/energy-transition-investment/

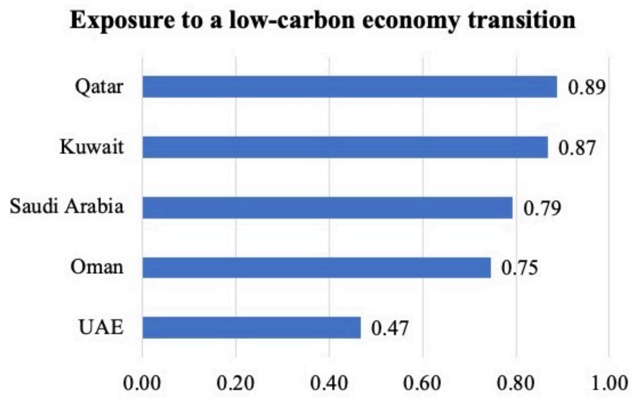
Renewable energy targets	
Bahrain	National renewable energy target of 5% by 2025 & 10% by 2035
Kuwait	Increase the share of renewable generation to 10% by 2030
Oman	Derive at least 30% of electricity from renewables by 2030
Qatar	Attain 20% of its energy from solar power by 2030
Saudi Arabia	Generate 50% of its energy from renewables by 2030
UAE	Reduce GHG emissions to 23.5% vs business-as-usual emissions for 2030
	Increase the share of clean power to 50% of the total energy mix by 2050

4. Are the GCC nations prepared for a low-carbon economy transition?

- The preparedness of countries for a low-carbon transition (LCT) is measured by **exposure and resilience indexes:** highlights turning the risks of an LCT into opportunities for robust growth.
- **GCC nations are signifcantly exposed,** especially given dependence on oil (resource rents, carbon intensity, GHG emissions): Qatar scores highest exposure & UAE the least
- **However, the GCC are relatively well prepared for an LCT** thanks to its resilience, particularly its relatively good macro stability and supportive business environment

alongside high quality of infrastructure, human capital and institutions



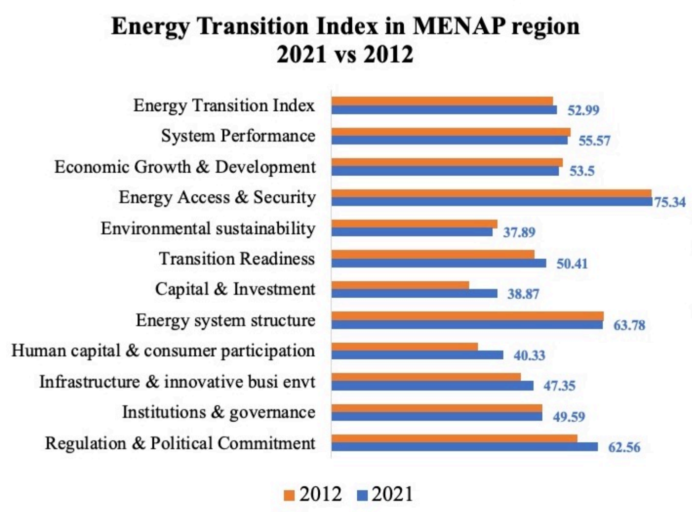


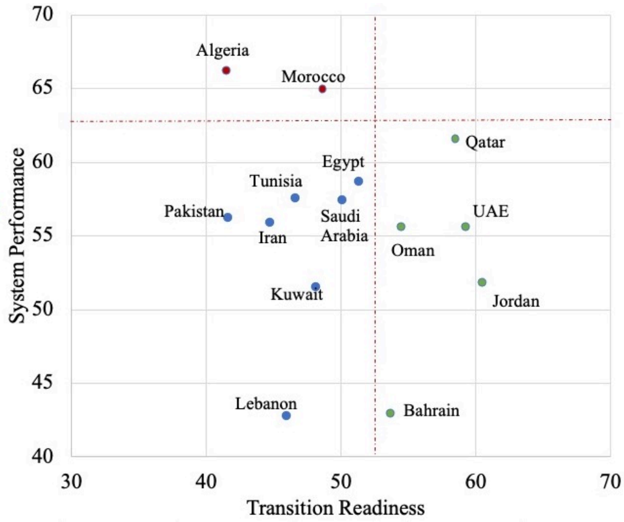
Source: Peszko, G. et. Al (2020) Chapter 5 in "Diversification & Cooperation in a Decarbonizing World", World Bank.

5. WEF's

Energy Transition Index ranks UAE just behind Qatar wrt energy systems & pathways to clean energy

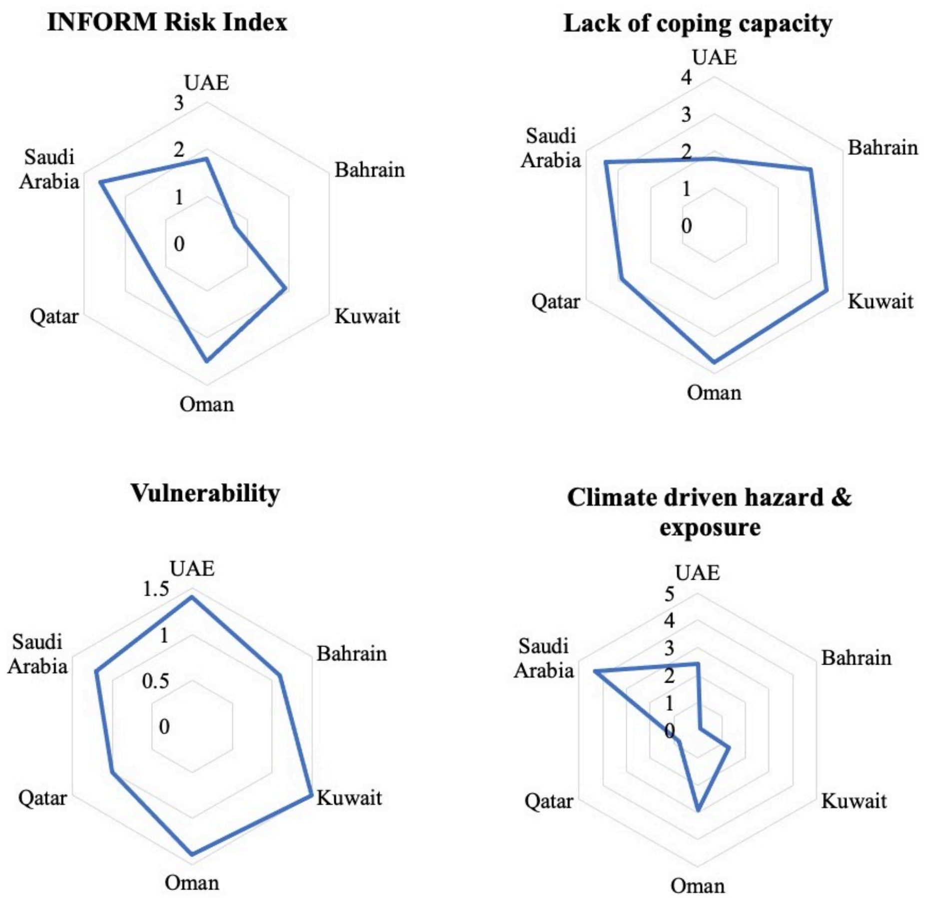
- **UAE ranked 64th globally on WEF's latest Energy Transition Index** (2021) out of a total 115 nations, just **behind Qatar at 53rd position**. Lebanon ranked lowest in the Middle East region at 112th.
- Among the various components of the Index, **MENAP's average falls farthest from the world average in two**: environmental sustainability (37.89 in MENAP vs 61.32 globally) and capital & investment (38.87 vs 55.17). Of the 11 categories, **region is worse-off compared to 2012 (initial year of results) in 4**: system performance, environmental sustainability, energy system structure and economic growth & development
- The **chart on the right** shows no MENAP countries in the top-right quadrant (high transition readiness & well-performing energy systems). **4 of 6 GCC nations are in the "leapfrog" quadrant** (**green dots**, high readiness but system performance below the mean); two countries Algeria and Morocco fall among those with potential challenges (**red dots**, above-average system performance but readiness below the mean).





Source: Energy Transition Index 2021, World Economic Forum. [*https://www.weforum.org/reports/fostering-effective-energy-transition-2021#report-nav*](https://www.weforum.org/reports/fostering-effective-energy-transition-2021#report-nav)

6. GCC risk for climate-driven hazards is much lower than regional counterparts



- The climate-driven **INFORM Risk 2021 Index** is derived from 3 dimensions: climate-driven hazard & exposure, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity.

- **GCC nations fare relatively better, scoring between 1.3 to 2.6 out of a total 10 (riskiest).** But, two scores are comparatively higher: Saudi Arabia's hazard & exposure score (largely due to conflict risk) and Oman's lack of coping capacity (institutional & governance indicators related to increasing the resilience of the society need improvement).

CountryName	HA	VU	CC	INFORM
Bahrain	0.6	1.1	3	1.3
Kuwait	1.2	1.4	3.6	1.8
Oman	2.9	1.4	3.7	2.5
Qatar	0.8	1	2.9	1.3
Saudi Arabia	4.3	1.2	3.4	2.6
United Arab Emirates	2.4	1.4	1.8	1.8

Source: INFORM Global Risk Index 2021. https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk

Powered by:

REFINITIV

Clean Energy Challenges & Prospects, Presentation at

the CEBC 7th MENA Clean Energy Summit, 20 Nov 2019

The presentation titled "Clean Energy Challenges & Prospects" was given as the opening keynote address at the CEBC 7th MENA Clean Energy Summit held in Dubai on 20th November 2019.

In his speech, Dr. Nasser Saidi, in his capacity as Chairman of the Clean Energy Business Council, provided an oversight on the clean energy and clean technology developments while outlining the major themes for the MENA region's renewable energy sector.

The focus was on energy efficiency (how it needs to be scaled up), the transformation of transportation (e.g. EVs), energy transition, and financial stability risks rising from climate change risks among others.