

Global pledging event raises \$11 billion for Ukraine

A global pledging event for Ukrainian refugees called “Stand Up for Ukraine” has raised 10.1 billion euros (\$11 billion), European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said in Warsaw on Saturday. “The ‘Stand Up For Ukraine’ campaign has raised 9.1 billion euros for people fleeing bombs, inside and outside Ukraine, with an additional billion pledged by EBRD (the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development)”, Von der Leyen said. **SEE ALSO P6**



Established 1981. Editor-in-chief: Abdullah bin Salim al Shueili

OMAN OBSERVER

www.omanobserver.om editor@omanobserver.om

P10

LECLERC GRABS POLE AHEAD OF VERSTAPPEN IN AUSTRALIA



P15

NEW MINING TENDER TARGETS RICH POTASH RESERVES



P19

ST MARK'S STORIED PALAZZO OPENS DOORS TO VENETIANS FOR FIRST TIME



MUSCAT

SEVERAL PLACES SEE HIGH TEMPERATURES

Several governorates on Saturday witnessed temperatures around and above 40 degrees Celsius, according to Oman Meteorology. The hottest places in the Sultanate of Oman were Al Seeb and Al Amerat, followed by Al Buraimi, Fahud, Al Rustaq, Samayil, Nizwa, Bahla, Adam, Sur, Masirah and Al Duqm as they all recorded temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius on Saturday afternoon. According to experts, the average high temperature seen in Muscat during April is generally 34.7 degrees Celsius. **SEE P2**

DEAL SIGNED FOR FIRST PENICILLIN PROJECT

Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC (MHD LLC), one of the largest and business houses in the Sultanate of Oman, has signed an agreement with Ali bin Moosa al Balushi, National Bank of Oman (NBO) and Sohar Port and Freezone for the establishment of a first-of-its-kind pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region – Penicillin General Integrated Industrial Company (Pen-G).

DETAILS ON P13

8

RAMADHAN

1443 AH

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr

04:34 AM

Dhuhr

12:13 PM

Asr

03:41 PM

Maghrib

06:31 PM

Isha

07:43 PM

INSIDE



PALESTINIAN KILLED IN ISRAELI MILITARY ATTACK

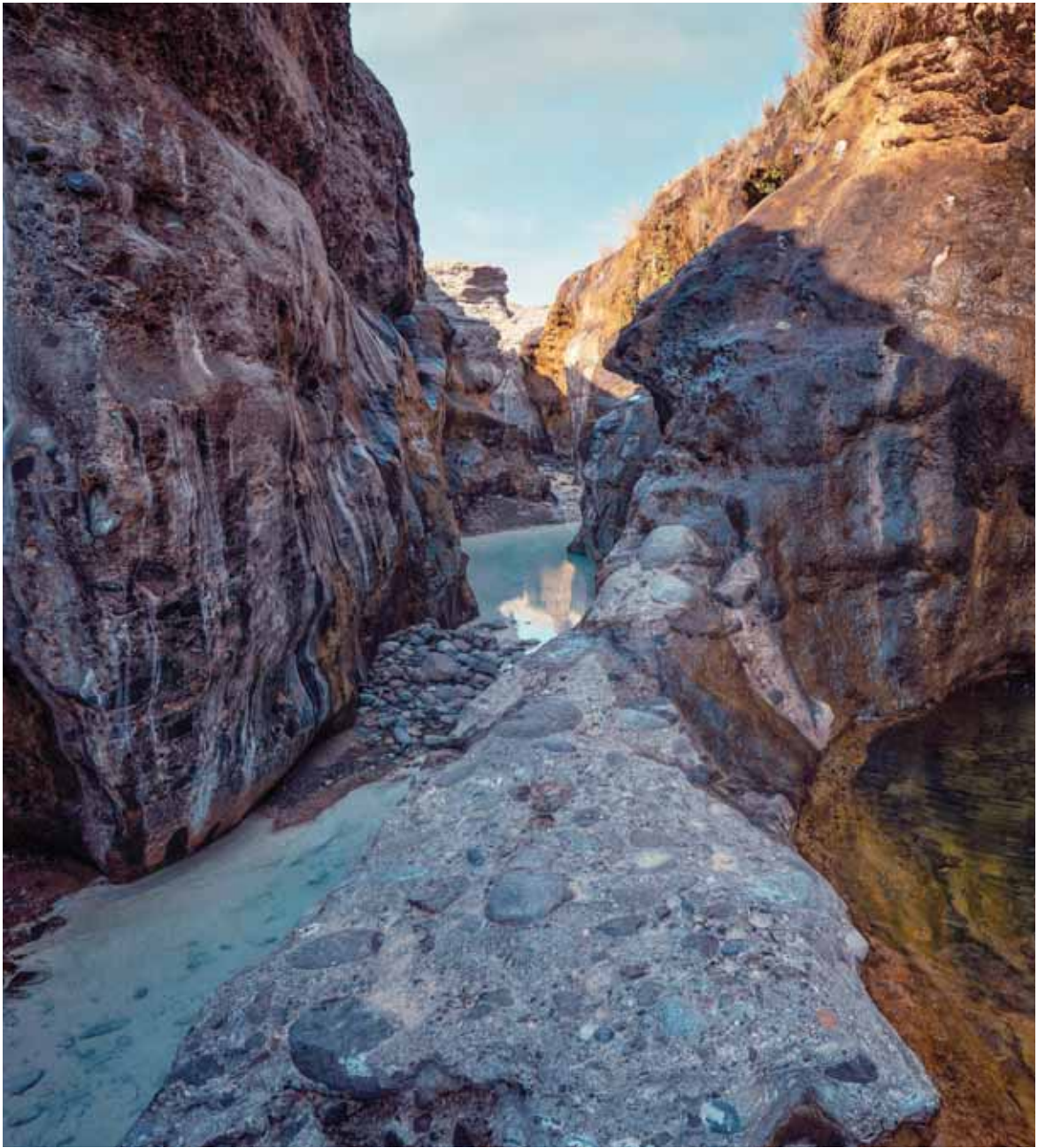
P6



WHAT IS INDIA DOING IN UKRAINE?

P9

AN ESCAPE TO WADI AL HOQAIN



The Sultanate of Oman's wadis are some of the best in the Middle East. Adventure lovers continue to be attracted to these wadis as they offer different levels of entertainment and without a doubt, these natural water bodies are bringing more joy as they offer relaxation and allow visitors to come closer to nature. One of the most visited wadis as of late is Wadi Al Hoqain in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq located about two hours drive from Muscat.

DETAILS ON P20

Oman welcomes council in Yemen

MUSCAT: The Foreign Ministry has welcomed the establishment of a new presidential council in Yemen.

“The Foreign Ministry issued a statement expressing the hope that the announcement of the establishment of a presidential leadership council in the sisterly Republic of Yemen will contribute in supporting the existing efforts to address the humanitarian situation and find a comprehensive political settlement that preserves Yemen's unity, sovereignty

and independence, in which all Yemeni parties participate, and in a manner that meets the aspirations of the sisterly Yemeni people in security and stability”, a statement said.

Yemen's president said on Thursday that he is handing his powers to a new leadership council, in a major shake-up in the coalition as a fragile ceasefire takes hold.

President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi made the announcement in a televised statement on the final day of

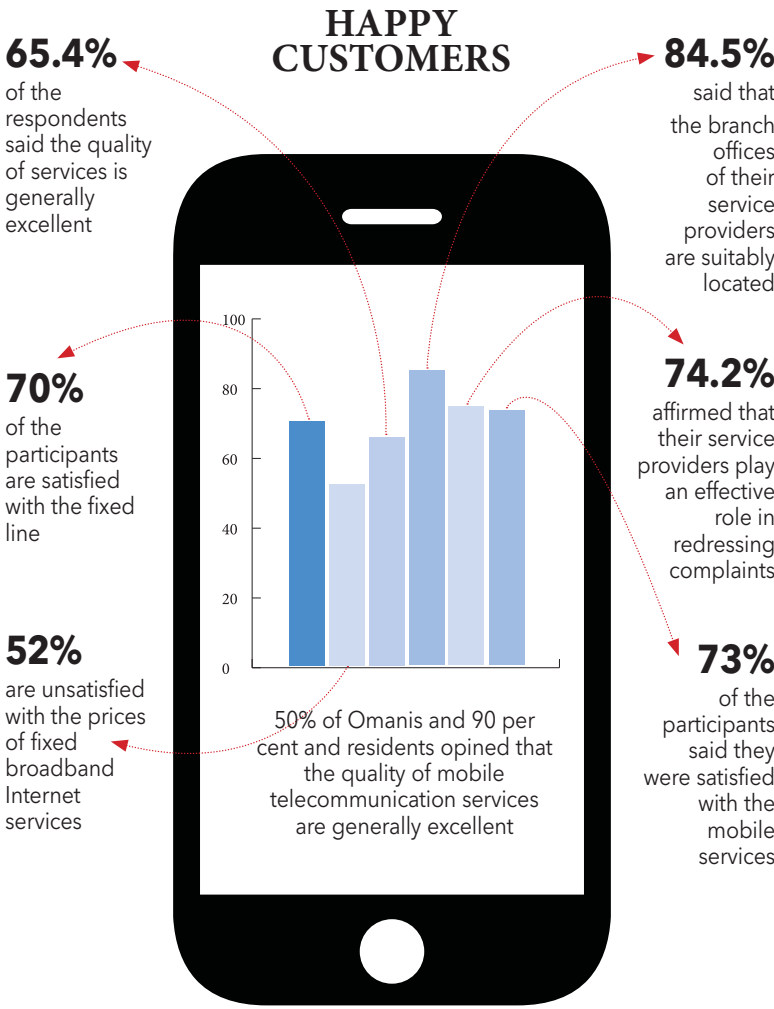
Yemen talks held in the Saudi capital Riyadh. “I irreversibly delegate to this presidential leadership council my full powers”, he said.

The new push to end the war follows seven years of combat that has shattered Yemen and spawned one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

The United Nations on Friday urged Yemen's warring parties to exercise “restraint” after they traded accusations of violations of a UN-brokered ceasefire.

— Agencies

73% SATISFIED WITH MOBILE SERVICES



MUSCAT: An opinion poll conducted by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) to measure satisfaction of the users of telecom services, showed that 70 per cent of the participants are satisfied with the fixed line communications services, while 52 per cent are unsatisfied with the prices of fixed broadband Internet services.

QUALITY SERVICES

It showed that 65.4 per cent of the respondents said the quality of services is generally excellent, while 84.5 per cent said that the branch offices of their service providers are suitably located.

Of those polled, 74.2 per cent affirmed that their service

providers play an effective role in redressing users' issues while 86 per cent said that the customer service employees are always ready to provide help.

Regarding mobile telecommunication services, 73 per cent of the participants said they were satisfied with the mobile telecommunication services, whereas 45 per cent were of the opinion that mobile Internet services are overpriced.

The opinion poll indicated that 76 per cent of the participants recommend their service provider to friends and relatives. Fifty per cent of Omanis and 90 per cent and residents opined that the quality of mobile telecommunication services are generally excellent. — ONA

Saudi Arabia to allow one million Haj pilgrims this year

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia said on Saturday it will permit one million Muslims from inside and outside the country to participate in this year's Haj, a sharp uptick after pandemic restrictions forced two years of drastically pared-down pilgrimages.

The move, while falling short of reinstating normal Haj conditions, offered hopeful news for many Muslims outside the kingdom who have been barred

from making the trip since 2019.

One of the five pillars of Islam, the Haj must be undertaken by all Muslims with the means at least once in their lives. Usually one of the world's largest religious gatherings, about 2.5 million people took part in 2019.

But after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, Saudi authorities allowed only 1,000 pilgrims to participate.



The following year, they upped the total to 60,000 fully vaccinated Saudi citizens and residents chosen through a lottery. This year the Saudi Haj ministry “has authorised one million pilgrims, both foreign and domestic, to perform the Haj”, it said in a pre-dawn statement on Saturday.

The pilgrimage, which will take place in July, will be limited to vaccinated Muslims under age

65, the statement said.

Those coming from outside Saudi Arabia, who must apply for Haj visas, will this year also be required to submit a negative Covid-19 PCR result from a test taken within 72 hours of travel.

The government wants to promote pilgrims' safety “while ensuring that the maximum number of Muslims worldwide can perform the Haj”, the statement said. — AFP



GIANT CABBAGE



An Omani farmer, Rami al Hadabi, displays a large cabbage cultivated on his farm in Samayil. Currently, he is working on installing greenhouses to expand his organic farming activities.

Work under way to channelise rainwater in Muscat Governorate

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabalnasseri

Implementation of a project to channelise rainwater through open channels in the Al Ghubrah area is under way. The (phase B) of the project has a length of 2,000 metres and is likely to be completed during the first quarter of 2023, Muscat Municipality announced.

The project comes as part of the Municipality's efforts to strengthen the rainwater drainage system in vital areas in the Governorate of Muscat.

The project aims to drain rainwater smoothly from the commercial district, next to the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, the opposite area, and in front of the Court Complex, all the way up to the stream of Wadi Athaiba.

It also aims to streamline traffic during rainfall, strengthen the drainage system and mitigate the effects of floods in climatic conditions.

The Municipality said that the project is based on the construction of open channels with a length of 2 km, consisting

of reinforced concrete and gravel lined with cement. It also includes changing a service path with a length of 270 metres and the transfer and protection of service lines intertwined with the rainwater drainage path.

The project came as part of the Municipality's plan to build a sustainable protection system with modern designs characterised by high quality and efficiency, which guarantees solving the problems of water gatherings and their negative effects on the surroundings of this vital area in the Governorate of Muscat, as well as making traffic flow more smoothly in various climatic conditions.

In mid of last March, the governorate revealed the detailed plan for treating the rainwater system and low areas, as it is hoped to implement projects for wadi drainage channels, prepare studies for the water drainage network in residential neighbourhoods, implement protection dam projects, and update and prepare flood risk maps, which include wadis and low spots in the governorate.

MoCIIP to unveil initiatives to attract foreign investments

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) will be holding its annual media forum to announce its plan for the current year, on Monday.

The forum will highlight initiatives that will be implemented by the ministry in the sectors of commerce and industry, specifications and standards, investment promotion, competition protection and monopoly prevention as well the



measures taken by the ministry to improve investment climate in the Sultanate of Oman to attract more foreign investments.

The ministry targets to upgrade the business environment to support knowledge-based economy and set up an attractive investment environment through providing various facilitations and improving the services.

The forum will be attended by

Qais bin Mohammed al Yousuf, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion; Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary for Commerce and Industry; Asila bint Salim al Samsamiyah, Under-Secretary for Investment Promotion; Mohsin bin Khamis al Balushi, adviser at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and a number of officials from the ministry.

— ONA

HEALTH EXHIBITION



The Directorate-General of Health Services in Muscat Governorate recently held a health exhibition in coincidence with a national campaign aimed at eradicating Aedes aegypti mosquitoes which transmit the viruses that cause dengue fever. The exhibition included distribution of brochures to increase public awareness and ratchet up support to curb vectors.

Tips to make Ramadhan more eco-friendly

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The holy month of Ramadhan teaches us moderation and self-restraint in its modest ways by fasting from dawn to dusk, helping us refine ourselves.

However, while being just to fellow beings, Ramadhan is equally a signpost to being fair to our surroundings, especially the environment, according to experts as well as scholars.

Islam encourages modesty and humbleness. It also repeatedly refers to nature. It is time to check in with your environmental footprint overall, identify one thing you can improve on, and start immediately.

A set of canons of becoming greener, this Ramadhan is the

buzzword that can be emulated by one and all.

"We all need to practise moderation in whatever we do and extend our love for the environment as well as show our care for others during this holy month of Ramadhan by inculcating a positive change in our attitude towards the planet," says Dana Sarhan, an environmental volunteer.

It is also when we spend more time indoors as people are fasting, and air conditioners are constantly on. Be considerate of future generations by managing your energy consumption responsibly.

Try using the timer option on your air conditioners or schedule a regular time of only a few hours... This reduces the overall heat effect generated by

thousands of ACs running at the same time and a large carbon footprint.

She gives some tips for a greener Ramadhan:

1. Buy local: With so many food items exported into Oman, it is a good time for retailers to promote Omani products throughout the month, whether fruits/vegetables, etc or any produce that is locally produced.

2. Reduce food waste: If you have returned to big family Iftars. Ask relatives to bring their crockery/Tupperware to carry any excess food home for subpar.

3. Food charity: Ramadhan is known as the month of

charity. When you prepare your Iftar consider agreeing to drop off some, to a friend or neighbour who is single or a couple or any etc, who may welcome a day off and it could be the environmentally friendly thing to do.

4. Cut down on red meat consumption: Red meat by far has the highest carbon footprint than other proteins. By reducing consumption, you are reducing your carbon footprint drastically.

For lights and other gadgets that consume electricity, one can purchase LED lamps, energy-efficient gadgets to save electricity and avoid unwanted expenses. Plugs with timers and gadgets scheduled on/off are also very handy.

Several governorates witness high temperatures

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

Several governorates on Saturday witnessed temperatures that were around and above 40 degrees Celsius, according to Oman Meteorology.

The hottest places in the Sultanate of Oman were Seeb and Al Amerat followed by Al Buraimi, Fahud, Rustaq, Samayil, Nizwa, Bahla, Adam, Sur, Masirah and Duqm as they all recorded temperatures above 40 degrees

Celsius on Saturday afternoon.

According to experts, the average high temperature seen in Muscat during April is generally 34.7 degrees Celsius, while low temperatures are generally around 24.7 degrees Celsius.

The general forecast from the Met department said, "Mainly clear skies over most of the governorates with high and medium clouds advection. Chances of convective clouds development over Al Hajar Mountain towards afternoon. Chances of late night to early



morning low-level clouds or fog patches over parts of South Al Sharqiyah."

Meanwhile, warning of extreme months ahead, the United Nations in a new report has warned unless

countries drastically accelerate efforts over the next few years to slash their emissions from coal, oil, and natural gas, the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, will likely be out of reach by the end of this decade.

Scientists say the dangers of global warming, which include worsening floods, droughts and ecosystem collapse are growing considerably.

Holding warming to just 1.5 degrees Celsius would require

nations to collectively reduce their planet-warming emissions by roughly 43 per cent by 2030 and to stop adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere altogether by the early 2050s, the report found.

By contrast, current policies by governments are only expected to reduce global emissions by a few percentage points this decade.

Last year, fossil fuel emissions worldwide rebounded to near-record highs after a brief dip because of the coronavirus pandemic.



TEXT & PHOTOS BY
YAHYA ALSALMANI

The 'Acacia Ehrenbergiana' is a desert tree. It is thorny and widespread in the Arabian Peninsula. It grows mostly in plains and valleys (wadis). Animals such as camels benefit from this tree's leaves, and its trunks are also used to make wooden poles.

Tar liquid is extracted from it to treat scabies in animals. It is also used to paint the trunks of fruit trees to protect them from fungi and insects. In addition, this tree is famous among 'bee producers' as they produce good quality honey that gains an excellent reputation among the locals.

While this tree is celebrating its flowering season, the 'Belenois aurota' is active and begins its breeding season, taking advantage of wild trees' yellow flowers as a primary food habitat.

'Belenois aurota', which is sometimes called 'Caper White', ranges throughout tropical Africa, Egypt, Arabian Peninsula and India. It is considered a permanent resident in Oman.

It possibly contributes to the populations emigrating to Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Forewings are strongly pointed, showing partial neat black veins on the edges but fully expressed on the undersides.

Whoever observes this butterfly finds it constantly active from sunrise until just before sunset. She frequents the branches of the fruit trees and enjoys the warmth of the atmosphere as she moves from one branch to another. This butterfly is easily spotted due to its beautiful colour. It has brown,



STATISTICS INDICATE THAT MORE
THAN 500 SPECIES OF OMANI
BUTTERFLIES HAVE BEEN OBSERVED

FLOWERING SEASON ATTRACTS BUTTERFLIES IN QURAYAT

white and black striped wings. It is characterised by its movement and a lot of movement between tree branches in search of flowers rich in liquids.

In the Wilayat of Qurayat, where "Acacia Ehrenbergiana" trees are abundant, dozens of these butterflies can be seen, especially during the flowering seasons, which start at the beginning of this month.

"Many nature lovers and environmentalists come to see these types of butterflies during these days. The pleasure of watching is not complete without visiting a number of tourist sites in the Wilayat of Qurayat, including the Bimmah Sinkhole and the Wadi Dayqah Dam," Ahmed al Nahdi, who has been working in the field of wildlife conservation for more than 20 years, told the *Observer*.

"When we see this large gathering of butterflies every year, we realise the importance of preserving wild trees. Therefore, we strive as much as possible to promote environmental awareness among the various segments of society. Conserving trees is the first step that leads us to conserve the elements of biodiversity," he explained.

"When we see this number of butterflies, it comes to our mind the importance of focusing on studying this species, because we may reach new information regarding the life of Omani butterflies."

National statistics indicate that more than 500 species of Omani butterflies have been observed. The competent authorities in entomology are still continuing their research to discover other types of butterflies found in various parts of Oman.



CAA grants licence to first training centre for drone operations

VINOD NAIR
@vinotnair

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) recently issued a licence to the Ibn Firnas Centre for Drones as the first centre for training in the operation of drones in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the requirements of civil aviation.

This licence came to the centre, which is supervised completely by qualified Omani cadres, after completing the requirements and standards of the relevant systems and the licensing process was carried out by inspectors from the national cadres of the Civil Aviation Authority.

This licence will also study possibilities of the project to licence the movement of drones, which



the authority is working on at this stage with partners in preparation for issuing permits to use drones for individuals in the future.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CM) has simplified the process of issuing licences for the use of unmanned aircraft (drones) for various purposes.

The new rule will benefit young Omani entrepreneurs who use this technology in businesses such as e-commerce, agriculture, photography, etc. As per decision 147/2020 issued on July 16, 2020, the age limit of the applicant should be a minimum of 18 years.

The drone must be insured

for civil liability for the benefit of others throughout the licence period. The licence is issued for one year and is renewable, and it may not be waived except after written approval from the authority.

The licence fees vary according to the type of use and the employer. The fee of R0 25 has been set for individual licences for civil use with the aircraft weighing no more than 5 kg.

The licence fee for aircraft weighing 25 kg and more for commercial purposes for large companies or institutions will be up to R0 500. The use of remote-control aircraft, drones, or any other flying object, without approval from the competent authority, is not allowed and is seen as a criminal offense.

RAMADHAN
AROUND
THE WORLD



BREAK FAST WITH BREAD

A child carries bread for Muslim devotees to break their fast on holy fasting month of Ramadhan in Kandahar. – AFP



PRAYER TIME

A woman prays in front of the Kaaba in the Saudi city of Mecca. Saudi Arabia said it will permit one million Muslims from inside and outside the country to participate in this year's Haj. – AFP



IFTAR MEAL

A Palestinian makes falafel, a food appreciated for the iftar meal, in the city centre of the occupied West Bank town of Hebron, on Sunday, during the holy month of Ramadhan. – AFP



A VIEW FROM MOSQUE

A picture taken from inside a mosque shows a war-ravaged street in Syria's northern city of Raqqa, during the holy month of Ramadhan, on Saturday. – AFP



Private sector urged to take advantage of incentives

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has urged private sector institutions and business owners to take advantage of various exemptions that will be granted to them, with regards to the expatriate workforce.

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) last week said establishments and individuals will be exempted from

paying fines pertaining to delayed renewals of resident cards.

The ROP said, "In the implementation of His Majesty's Royal directives, establishments and individuals will be exempted from paying fines pertaining to the delayed renewal of resident cards effective on April 6, 2022, provided that the current situation is rectified before September 1, 2022."

Enh Ridha bin Juma al

Saleh, Chairman of OCCI, said, "Exempting establishments and individuals from fines related to the delay in renewing residence and the resident card works to control and regulate the labour market."

He added, "The Royal Oman Police's announcement to exempt establishments and individuals from fines related to the delay in renewing residence and the resident card comes to work on

controlling and regulating the labour market."

Al Saleh said the announcement came considering the implementation of the royal directives from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to reduce the fees for issuing and renewing licences for the recruitment of the expatriate workforce, which will facilitate business in a way that supports economic activity."

He said that these exemptions

come at a time when many private sector institutions are working to rebuild their institutions and address the effects left by the pandemic.

Therefore, the exemption from fines will accelerate recovery and return to growth rates for many institutions.

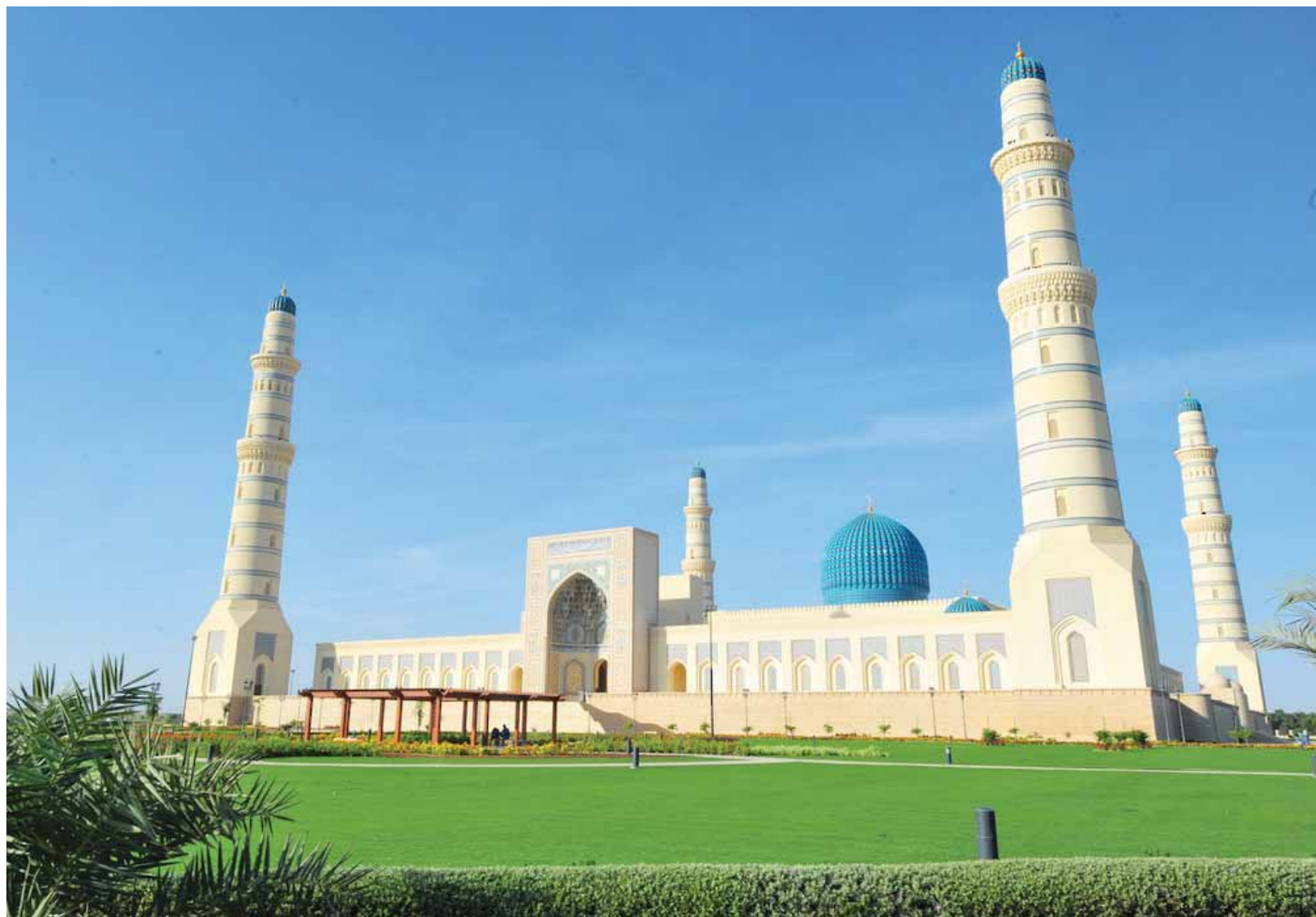
It may be noted that the Ministry of Labour has exempted companies and individuals from renewal penalties; provided that

the renewal is completed before September 1, 2022, while the new discounted fees for work permits will be effective from June 1, 2022.

In line with the Royal directives for the work permit discounted fees, the Ministry of Labour announced the new fees for expatriates according to the type of profession.

A 30-per cent discount will be granted to companies abiding by the Omanisation percentage.

■ A BEACON OF ISLAMIC TRADITION



The Sultan Qaboos Mosque in Suhar is one of the most important Islamic monuments in the Sultanate of Oman. It was opened on October 28, 2016. It is distinguished by its carvings and crystal dome. It has been built to the highest standards and in the Uzbek style and is similar to the Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarkand. — ONA

Muscat Yog Mahotsav 2022 — 75 days, 75 events launched

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 9

Yoga symbolises a journey for universal health and well-being. Attesting to the global appeal of Yoga, the United Nations declared June 21 as the 'International Day of Yoga' in 2014. The International Day of Yoga (IDY) has over the years morphed into a global movement for holistic health and well-being and is celebrated all over the world every year on June 21 with great enthusiasm.

"Yoga is quite popular in Oman also and over the years an increasing number of Yoga enthusiasts from different nationalities have participated in IDY. This year as we celebrate 75 glorious years of India's independence, the Embassy, with support of various Yoga organisations in Oman, has plans to organise 75 events in the coming 75 days in the run-up to the celebration of 8th IDY. The events will be organised under the theme of 'Muscat Yog Mahotsav 2022 – 75 Days, 75 Events', that will continue till June 21. This Yoga festival will include events in both online and offline modes at different locations in Muscat and also in many cities of Oman such as Salalah, Suhar, Sur, etc," said a release from the Indian Embassy.

The 'Muscat Yog Mahotsav'



was launched with a curtain raiser event organised on Friday. Social Club representatives and members of several Yoga organisations in Oman attended the event, which kick started with a ceremonial lamp lighting by Divya Narang.

Ambassador Amit Narang briefly addressed the gathering and stated that Yoga connects us to our inner self and acts as a catalyst for overall health. A Tanjore painting made by Kavitha Ramakrishna depicting one of the most powerful and versatile Yoga movements – Sun Salutation – was also unveiled by the ambassador to mark the formal start of Yoga Mahotsav in Oman.

After a brief formal programme, the Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) was performed

by all the participants, which was demonstrated by Yoga experts from Sanskriti Yoga, Art of Living, Yoga Shaala and Yoga City.

"The embassy invites all Yoga enthusiasts, Indians, Omanis and friends from other countries resident in Oman to participate in this first ever Yoga festival of health and well-being. The weekly schedule of events under the Yog Mahotsav will be uploaded with details on the Embassy's social media."

The main celebration of 8th IDY on June 21 is planned to be held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre with the support of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, Yoga organisations, Indian Social Club, Indian Schools in Oman as well as Oman based Yoga practitioners.

Banks see increase in loans

MUSCAT: Total loans and financing of commercial banks in the Sultanate of Oman increased to more than RO 27 billion, compared to RO 26 billion during the same period in 2021.

According to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the total loans and financing of commercial banks in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 3.9 per cent at the end of last January to reach RO 27,951,800 billion, compared to RO 26,890,200 billion during the same period in 2021, and the average interest rate on total loans increased by 0.1 per cent.

— ONA

Noora cherishes emotional reunion after pandemic

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

For Noora, an expatriate who embraced Islam three years ago, this Ramadhan is all about meeting her sisters and 'Ustadhs' after two long years of fear of pandemic and convergence.

A Filipino national, Noora works as domestic help, and this is her fourth Ramadhan fasting after she embraced Islam in 2019.

"This Ramadhan brings in great relief and happiness as we are able to lead a normal life again, and for me, I'm able to see my friends and 'Ustadhs' who helped me embrace this religion of truth and peace," an excited Noora told the Observer.

Her previous Ramadhan was a little bit gloomy, in her own words, because she was just home most of the time and was not able to meet her sisters as they used to during Ramadhan by attending lectures and other gatherings about the holy Quran.

But this year, she met with all of them and reunited in the name of holy Quran and lectures on Islam yet again.

"It was very emotional since we didn't see each other for long. I attended lectures again and read the Quran with them. We are praying Taraweeh at the mosque, all praises to the Almighty."

Noora fasted for three weeks continuously for the first time in her life with due piety and commitment to Allah in 2019. "I was excited at the beginning of the holy month and still now, after fasting for the last three to four years, I'm able to keep that spirit of starving for the cause of Allah Almighty," she said.

Noora arrived in Oman some 14 years ago and worked as a domestic help in some local



houses. It all began when she started to observe the prayers. She didn't realise that she was slowly falling in love with the religion then, according to her.

It all began some years ago when she started observing what her 'madam' was doing on the prayer mat and slowly developed a liking towards the beautiful mat, which was a classy one, brought from the holy land of Makkah.

Sensing her urge to learn and understand Islam, her boss arranged some scholars to educate Noora on Islam, and it was the gateway for her. She recited 'kalima shahadah' and became an active Muslim.

"May Allah Subhanu Wa Taala reward us this holy month of Ramadhan, all the khair in this Dunya and Akhirah (this world and the next), Ameen Ya Rabbil Alameen," she concludes.



Tender Number Re-T-06-2022

Tender Announcement

"Mwasalat" invites professional firms for the following tender:

Tender Name	Supply of Main Engine MTU 16V 4000 M71 for Vessel HSC Hormuz
Project Summary	Within the framework of this tender, MWASALAT would like to have an authorized and a certified dealer by an IACS class to supply following item or items for the MTU 16V 4000 M71 for the engine of Vessel HSC Hormuz based on the terms and conditions stipulated in the tender document. Option#01: Supply of Remanufactured Engine. Option#02: Supplying a Crankshaft & Block. Option#03: Supplying a Short-Block Option#04: Supplying a Long-Block
Tender Fee	Free
Grade & Specialty	Authorized and a certified dealer by an International Association of Classification Societies (IACS)

Start date for tender document distribution	Last date for tender document distribution	Last date for submission
SUN 10 April 2022	THU 14 April 2022	SUN 24 April 2022

The Tender documents may be shared by email during official working hours between 9:00A.M - 2:00 P.M.
Tenders are requested to share commercial registration (CR) & business card through email tenders@mwasalat.om and tender number as the subject of email.
Tender Document shall be shared by email
The submission Date / Time shall be on or before the deadline specified in the above table.
Participants should submit their offers in the tender box located in the head-quarter National Ferries Company L.L.C (MWASALAT) at Ghala, Muscat (Jabal Shams Building 5th floor). Any proposal submitted after the given Date & Time shall be rejected.

"Mwasalat"
Head Quarter, Ghala Tel: +968 24121500/24121555
P.O.Box: 911, Al Khawala, PC: 133, Sultanate of Oman

For more information please send to:
tenders@mwasalat.om



Civilians flee eastern Ukraine after deadly railway station attack

KRAMATORSK, Ukraine: Evacuations resumed on Saturday from the town in eastern Ukraine where a missile strike killed 52 people at a railway station as civilians fled a feared Russian offensive.

Six weeks into Russia’s war, Moscow has shifted its focus to eastern and southern Ukraine after stiff resistance ended plans to swiftly capture Kyiv.

Civilians trapped in the region have faced brutal conditions, and EU leaders met with President Volodymyr Zelensky in a show of support as news emerged of the devastating attack on Kramatorsk’s station. The 52 victims included five children.

With thousands killed in fighting and more than 11 million fleeing their homes, Zelensky said the strike marked a fresh atrocity and called for a “firm global response” to the bloody incident.

“This is another Russian war crime for which everyone involved will be held accountable,” he said in a video message.

“World powers have already condemned Russia’s attack on Kramatorsk. We expect a firm global response to this war crime.”

Zelensky later said he remained open to talks with Russia to resolve the conflict.

US President Joe Biden accused Russia of being behind a “horrific atrocity” in the de facto capital of the Ukrainian-controlled Donetsk region, and France condemned the strike as a “crime against humanity”.

Moscow denied responsibility for the rocket attack on Friday



Antonina Kaletnyk waits for the body of her son in front of a collapsed building in the town of Borodianska, northwest of Kyiv. — AFP

morning, which killed 52 and injured a further 109 people, according to the latest official count.

The Ukrainian president said the bombing had been reported in Russia before the missiles had even landed and called for more weaponry to counter Moscow’s aggression.

“I am sure that the victory of Ukraine is just a matter of time, and I will do everything to reduce this time,” he added.

Minibuses assembled at a church in Kramatorsk to collect shaken evacuees on Saturday. Almost 80 people, most of them elderly, took shelter overnight in the building, not far from the

targeted station.

“There were around 300 to 400 people who rushed here after the strike,” Yevgeny, a member of the Protestant church, said.

“They were traumatised. Half of them ran to shelter in the cellar, others wanted to leave as soon as possible. Some were evacuated by bus in the afternoon (on Friday).”

The station in Kramatorsk was being used as the main evacuation hub for refugees from the parts of the eastern Donbas region still under Ukrainian control.

AFP reporters at the station saw the remains of the missile tagged in white paint with the words “for our children” in Russian. The expression is frequently used

by pro-Russian separatists in reference to their losses since the start of the first Donbas war in 2014. The governor of Donetsk claimed a missile with cluster munitions was used in the attack, according to remarks published by the Interfax news agency.

The strike came as European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell were in Kyiv for talks with Zelensky and to visit the scene of civilian killings in Bucha.

Russia faces “decay” because of ever tougher sanctions and Ukraine had a “European future”, von der Leyen said at a news conference with Zelensky. — AFP

One dead as Israel army raids West Bank

JENIN: Israeli security forces raided the flashpoint West Bank district of Jenin on Saturday killing a Palestinian and wounding 12 others, after vowing there will “not be limits” to curb surging violence.

The operation, which lasted several hours, came after a gunman from Jenin went on a shooting rampage in a popular Tel Aviv nightlife area on Thursday evening, killing three Israelis and wounding more than a dozen others.

Following the attack, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett gave security agencies “full freedom” to end deadly violence that has surged since March 22 “in order to defeat terror”.

“There are not and will not be limits for this war,” Bennett.

On Saturday, the army said security forces had launched the operation in the city of Jenin, in the north of

the occupied West Bank, its Palestinian refugee camp and adjacent villages.

The Palestinian health ministry said that at least one Palestinian man was killed by Israeli gunfire, while the Red Crescent said 12 others were wounded.

Crowds of mourners marched through the streets carrying the body of the man -- identified by Palestinian officials as 25-year-old Ahmad al Saadi -- on a stretcher covered with the flag of the Gaza Strip-based group Islamic Jihad.

Palestinian security sources said part of Saturday’s operation was to identify the home of the Tel Aviv assailant ahead of demolishing it.

Rights activists have repeatedly denounced Israel’s policy of destroying the homes of Palestinian attackers as collective punishment, while Israel says it acts as a deterrent. — AFP



Tear gas canisters are fired from an Israeli military vehicle near the Palestinian refugee camp of Jenin in the occupied West Bank on Saturday. — AFP

Pakistan lawmakers clash as PM no-trust vote adjourned again

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan lawmakers clashed angrily in the national assembly on Saturday with the opposition accusing ruling party members of wasting time ahead of a no-confidence vote that will likely see Prime Minister Imran Khan removed from office.

The session was adjourned for a second time late on Saturday afternoon, with lawmakers told to return in the evening after breaking their Ramadhan fast.

Khan, who was not present, has lost his majority in the 342-seat assembly through defections by coalition partners and members of his own party, and the opposition needs just 172 votes to dismiss him.

There is no vote for a new premier on the agenda, but that could change and Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) leader Shehbaz Sharif is the anointed candidate.

Whoever takes over will still have to deal with the issues that bedevilled Khan — soaring inflation, a feeble rupee and crippling debt.

Militancy is also on the rise, with Pakistan’s Taliban emboldened by the return to power last year of the hardline Islamist group in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Tempers rose when Shehbaz insisted a vote be held immediately — as ordered by the Supreme Court on Thursday — but Khan



People listen to Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan addressing the nation on television at a restaurant in Islamabad late on Friday. — AFP

loyalists demanded discussion first on their leader’s claims there had been foreign interference in

the process.

“You will run proceedings of the house under the order of the

Supreme Court,” said a furious Shehbaz, wagging his finger.

“Parliament is going to write a new history. Today, the parliament is going to defeat a... prime minister.”

“We intend to face it in accordance with law and constitution,” replied Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, adding: “It is my duty to defend the motion.”

Qureshi returned after an adjournment with a litany of grievances, and accused the opposition of leading the country down a dangerous path.

“History will expose all those, who set the stage for this move to topple the government,” he said, to chants of “vote, vote” from the

opposition.

Khan, 69, said late on Friday he had accepted a Supreme Court ruling that ordered the no-confidence vote, but insisted he was the victim of a “regime change” conspiracy involving the United States.

The former international cricket star said he would not cooperate with any incoming administration and called on his supporters to take to the streets.

A heavy security blanket was thrown over the capital on Saturday, with thousands of police on the streets and a ring of steel containers blocking access to the government enclave.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

WASHINGTON

First private mission reaches ISS

The first fully private mission reached the International Space Station early on Saturday with a four-member crew from startup company Axiom Space.

Nasa has hailed the three-way partnership with Axiom and SpaceX as a key step towards commercialising the region of space known as “Low Earth Orbit,” leaving the agency to focus on more ambitious voyages deeper into the cosmos.

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket with the Crew Dragon capsule



Endeavor docked at 1229 GMT on Saturday and the crew entered the space station nearly two hours later, after launching from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Friday.

COLOMBO

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka hikes rates as protests spiral

Cash-strapped Sri Lanka’s central bank hiked interest rates by a record 700 basis points on Friday as police fired tear gas at hundreds of students protesting over the economic crisis.

Severe shortages of food and fuel, alongside lengthy electricity blackouts, have led to weeks of widespread anti-government demonstrations — with calls for President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resign. The latest protests saw students try to march on Friday to the national parliament,



and police used water cannons in efforts to disburse the angry crowds. Monks, who had largely rallied to elect Rajapaksa at the November 2019 polls were also seen joining demonstrations in the capital Colombo.

JUBA

Over 60pc South Sudanese facing food crisis

More than 7.7 million South Sudanese, around 63 per cent of the population, are facing a food crisis as violence intensifies in the country, the government and United Nations said on Saturday.

The figure marks a seven-per cent hike on the figure reported last year. According to the joint report, which was presented to the press on Saturday, climatic shocks such as floods and droughts, and population displacements are contributing to the increased food insecurity, as



well as the ongoing armed clashes. South Sudan — the world’s newest nation — has suffered from chronic instability since independence in 2011, spending almost half of its life as a nation at war.

Globalisation is over. The global culture wars have begun

DAVID BROOKS

I’m from a fortunate generation. I can remember a time — about a quarter-century ago — when the world seemed to be coming together. The great Cold War contest between communism and capitalism appeared to be over. Democracy was still spreading. Nations were becoming more economically interdependent. The Internet seemed ready to foster worldwide communications. It seemed as if there would be a global convergence around a set of universal values — freedom, equality, personal dignity, pluralism, human rights.

We called this process of convergence globalisation. It was, first of all, an economic and technological process — about growing trade and investment between nations and the spread of technologies that put, say, Wikipedia instantly at our fingertips. But globalisation was also a political, social and moral process.

In the 1990s, British sociologist Anthony Giddens argued that globalisation is “a shift in our very life circumstances. It is the way we now live.” It involves “the intensification of worldwide social relations.” Globalisation was about the integration of worldviews, products, ideas and culture.

This fit in with an academic theory that had been floating around called Modernization Theory. The idea was that as nations developed, they would become more like us in the West — the ones who had already modernised.

In the wider public conversation, it was sometimes assumed that nations all around the world would admire the success of the Western democracies and seek to imitate us. It was sometimes assumed that as people “modernised” they would become more bourgeois, consumerist, peaceful — just like us. It was sometimes assumed that as societies modernised, they’d become more secular, just as in Europe and parts of the United States. They’d be more driven by the desire to make money than to conquer others. They’d be more driven by the desire to settle down into suburban homes than by the fanatical ideologies or the sort of hunger for prestige and conquest that had doomed humanity to centuries of war.

This was an optimistic vision of how history would evolve, a vision of progress and convergence. Unfortunately, this vision does not describe the world we live in today. The world is not converging anymore; it’s diverging. The process of globalisation has slowed and, in some cases, even kicked into reverse. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine highlights these trends. While Ukraine’s brave fight against authoritarian aggression is an inspiration in the West, much of the world remains unmoved, even sympathetic to Vladimir Putin.

The Economist reports that from 2008 to 2019, world trade, relative to global gross domestic product, fell by about 5 percentage points. There has been a slew of new tariffs and other barriers to trade. Immigration flows have slowed. Global flows of long-term investment fell by half from 2016 to 2019. The causes of this deglobalisation are broad and deep. The 2008 financial crisis delegitimised global capitalism for many people. China has apparently demonstrated that mercantilism can be an effective economic strategy. All manner of anti-globalisation movements have arisen: The



Brexiteers, xenophobic nationalists, Trumpian populists, the anti-globalist left.

There’s just a lot more global conflict than there was in that brief holiday from history in the ’90s. Trade, travel and even communication across political blocs have become more morally, politically and economically fraught. Hundreds of companies have withdrawn from Russia as the West partly decouples from Putin’s war machine. Many Western consumers don’t want trade with China because of accusations of forced labour and genocide. Many Western CEOs are rethinking their operations in China as the regime gets more hostile to the West and as supply chains are threatened by political uncertainty. In 2014 the United States barred the Chinese tech company Huawei from bidding on government contracts. Joe Biden has strengthened “Buy American” rules so that the US government buys more stuff domestically.

The world economy seems to be gradually decoupling into, for starters, a Western zone and a Chinese zone. Foreign direct investment flows between China and America were nearly \$30 billion per year five years ago. Now they are down to \$5 billion.

As John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge wrote in a superb essay for Bloomberg, “geopolitics is definitively moving against globalisation — towards a world dominated by two or three great trading blocs.” This broader context, and especially the invasion of Ukraine, “is burying most of the basic assumptions that have underlain business thinking about the world for the past 40 years.”

Sure, globalisation as flows of trade will continue. But globalisation as the driving logic of world affairs — that seems to be over. Economic rivalries have now merged

with political, moral and other rivalries into one global contest for dominance. Globalisation has been replaced by something that looks a lot like global culture war.

Looking back, we probably put too much emphasis on the power of material forces like economics and technology to drive human events and bring us all together. This is not the first time this has happened. In the early 20th century, Norman Angell wrote a now notorious book called “The Great Illusion” that argued that the industrialised nations of his time were too economically interdependent to go to war with one another. Instead, two world wars followed.

The fact is that human behaviour is often driven by forces much deeper than economic and political self-interest, at least as Western rationalists typically understand these things. It’s these deeper motivations that are driving events right now — and they are sending history off into wildly unpredictable directions.

First, humans are powerfully driven by what are known as the thymotic desires. These are the needs to be seen, respected, appreciated. If you give people the impression that they are unseen, disrespected and unappreciated, they will become enraged, resentful and vengeful. They will perceive diminishment as injustice and respond with aggressive indignation.

Global politics over the past few decades functioned as a massive social inequality machine. In country after country, groups of highly educated urban elites have arisen to dominate media, universities, culture and often political power. Great swaths of people feel looked down upon and ignored. In country after country, populist leaders have arisen to exploit these resentments: Donald Trump in the US, Narendra Modi in India, Marine Le Pen in France.

How Germany became Putin’s enabler

PAUL KRUGMAN

Vladimir Putin’s war of aggression runs on the money Russia gets by selling fossil fuels to Europe. And while Ukraine has, incredibly, repelled Russia’s attempt to seize Kyiv, Putin won’t be definitively stopped until Europe ends its energy dependence.

Which means that Germany — whose political and business leaders insist that they can’t do without Russian natural gas, even though many of its own economists disagree — has in effect become Putin’s prime enabler. This is shameful; it is also incredibly hypocritical given recent German history.

The background: Germany has been warned for decades about the risks of becoming dependent on Russian gas. But its leaders, focused on the short-run benefits of cheap energy, ignored those warnings. On the eve of the Ukraine war, 55% of German gas came from Russia.

There’s no question that quickly cutting off or even greatly reducing this gas flow would be painful. But multiple economic analyses — from the Brussels-based Bruegel Institute, the International Energy Agency and ECONtribute, a think-tank sponsored by the Universities of Bonn and Cologne — have found that the effects of drastically reducing gas imports from Russia would be far from catastrophic to Germany.

As one member of the German Council of Economic Experts, which fills a role somewhat similar to that of the

US Council of Economic Advisers, put it, an embargo on Russian gas would be difficult but “feasible.”

The ECONtribute analysis offers a range of estimates, but their worst-case number is that an embargo on Russian gas would temporarily reduce Germany’s real gross domestic product by 2.1%. I’ll put that number in context shortly.

Now, German industrialists refuse to accept economists’ estimates, insisting that a gas embargo would indeed be catastrophic. But they would say that, wouldn’t they? Industrial leaders everywhere always claim that any proposed restriction on their activities would be an economic disaster.

For example, back in 1990, US industry groups issued dire warnings against policies to reduce acid rain, insisting that they would cost hundreds of billions and even lead to “the potential destruction of the Midwest economy.” None of that happened; in fact, the new rules produced large public health benefits at modest financial cost.

Unfortunately, Germany’s political leaders, including Chancellor Olaf Scholz, have taken the side of the scaremongers. The revelations of Russian atrocities in Ukraine have led to grudging acknowledgements that something must be done, but still not much sense of urgency.

What strikes me — a parallel that for some reason I haven’t seen many people drawing — is the contrast between Germany’s current reluctance to make moderate sacrifices, even in the face of horrific war crimes, and the immense sacrifices Germany demanded of other countries during the European debt crisis a decade ago.

As some readers may remember, early last decade much



Germany – whose political and business leaders insist that they can’t do without Russian natural gas, even though many of its own economists disagree – has in effect become Putin’s prime enabler

of southern Europe faced a crisis as lending dried up, sending interest rates on government debt soaring. German officials were quick to blame these countries for their own plight, insisting, with much moralising, that they were in trouble because they had been fiscally irresponsible and now needed to pay the price.

As it turns out, this diagnosis was mostly wrong. Much of the surge in southern European interest rates reflected a market panic rather than fundamentals; borrowing costs plunged, even for Greece, after the president of the European Central Bank said three words — “whatever it takes” — suggesting that the bank would, if necessary, step in to buy the debt of troubled economies. Yet Germany took the lead in demanding that debtor nations impose extreme austerity measures, especially spending cuts, no matter how large the economic costs. And those costs were immense: Between 2009 and 2013, the Greek economy shrank by 21% while the unemployment rate rose to 27%.

But while Germany was willing to impose economic and social catastrophe on countries it claimed had been irresponsible in their borrowing, it has been unwilling to impose far smaller costs on itself despite the undeniable irresponsibility of its past energy policies.

I’m not sure how to quantify this, but my sense is that Germany received far more and clearer warning about its feckless reliance on Russian gas than Greece ever did about its precrisis borrowing. Yet it seems as if Germany’s famous eagerness to treat economic policy as a morality play applies only to other countries.

Don't be too shy



Dr Hamed al Sinawi
@alsinawi

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital

“Social anxiety disorder can be seen as an extreme form of shyness that impacts social and occupational functioning.”

A few weeks ago a social media post cited an article that suggested Omanis have a higher level of social anxiety disorder than people from other countries. As I read that I recalled the number of times a patient had come to my private clinic complaining of being anxious in particular social situations, the main ones were attending meetings, giving a presentation and attending a social gathering. Most of the people who came for consultations were successful young men and women who have stable jobs and often get good appraisals at the end of the year yet they feel extremely uncomfortable when they have to participate in public speaking due to their fear of being judged or scrutinised by others. Most of them understand that their fears are

irrational or unreasonable, yet feel powerless to overcome them.

Social anxiety is sometimes considered an extreme form of shyness yet shyness tends to be temporary and does not disrupt one's life whereas social anxiety is persistent and can affect the person's ability at work and social interactions outside his or her family. In its severe forms, social anxiety can make the person avoid shopping in big malls, eating in restaurants or using the phone in public. A person with social anxiety experience different physical symptoms such as dizziness, increased heart rate, sweating, nausea and blushing which sometimes makes it difficult to speak, they also experience psychological symptoms in the form of intense worrying that can occur days before a social gathering and constant fear of embarrassment that makes them try to avoid the situation by refusing to attend the

SOCIAL ANXIETY IS NOT CLASSIFIED AS SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS. THE SYMPTOMS CAUSE DISTRESS TO THE PATIENT AND MAY STOP HIM OR HER REACH THEIR POTENTIALS

meeting or call in sick. In severe cases a person may resort to using alcohol to ease their nerves which makes them at risk of developing drinking problems.

So what causes people to develop social anxiety? According to scientific studies, the exact cause is not yet known but there are interactions between genetic factors, early childhood experiences that make some people more at risk. Some studies link experiencing bullying, emotional abuse and family conflict to developing social anxiety disorder.

So how can one deal with social

anxiety? The first step is getting a diagnosis from a qualified doctor or psychologist who will be asking you questions to confirm the diagnosis then suggest the type of treatment depending on the severity of your symptoms and the presence of other mental health problems such as depression or generalised anxiety. While some patients would benefit from psychological interventions others would need medication to treat symptoms.

In my practice I start by explaining the nature of social anxiety symptoms in simple terms and help the person identify their triggers, be it public speaking or attending social gathering. I also ask the person to identify how their symptoms affected their lives and what safety behaviour they use; for example attending a gathering with a friend or being prepared well before giving a presentation. For those with fear of public speaking I often

suggest rehearsing well or recording oneself while rehearsing, then getting feedback from a close friend or colleague. The most common used type of psychotherapy is called cognitive behavioural therapy and it focuses on helping the person understand the link between their thoughts, emotions and the physical symptoms and learning how to control anxiety through relaxation and breathing and how to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. The other types of therapy is called exposure therapy which focuses on helping the person gradually face social situations instead of avoiding them.

Social anxiety is not classified as serious mental illness. The symptoms cause distress to the patient and may stop him or her reach their potentials. If you or anyone you know has social anxiety then don't shy away from seeking help.

Le Pen's 'changed' image behind French election rise

ADAM PLOWRIGHT

French far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen is a different politician from five years ago, her supporters claim; more confident, less error-prone, more in tune with the country. At her third tilt at power, will it be enough?

At her last rally before the first round of France's election this weekend, thousands turned out on Thursday in southern Perpignan at an event marked by a sense of growing confidence.

"I think we'll win this one," said Guillaume D'Ersu, a 39-year-old unemployed man. "She's had a good campaign. Last time, it was a bit Trump-like. This time it's different."

LE PEN HAS ADMITTED TO MISTAKES IN HER DOOMED BID IN 2017 TO DEFEAT EMMANUEL MACRON, WHO BEAT HER BY 66 PER CENT TO 34 PER CENT IN THE RUN-OFF VOTE

Le Pen has admitted to mistakes in her doomed bid in 2017 to defeat Emmanuel Macron, who beat her by 66 per cent to 34 per cent in the run-off vote.

Many wondered if she could bounce back from such a heavy defeat which saw her suffer near-

humiliation in a head-to-head debate with Macron that left even ardent supporters wincing.

"We knew after the debate that it wasn't going to work out," said Jeannine Justrobe, a 63-year-old hairdresser at the Perpignan rally. "She's grown more mature since."

The latest polls show Le Pen rising fast ahead of Sunday's first round, and only slightly behind Macron in the event of another run-off between them.

An average of polls puts the arch-nationalist on 47 per cent and the pro-EU president on 53 per cent.

'UNCHANGED'

Le Pen's campaign has seen her concentrate her efforts on rural and small-town France, as well as addressing one of her biggest political weaknesses: her association with racism.

She has spent a decade on what she calls the "de-toxification" of her party's image, changing its name from the National Front to the National Rally in 2018.

While in the last election she was warning about "Islamist totalitarianism" and Macron's intention to "swamp" France with immigrants, she has been focusing this time on rising prices and the cost of living. Previous pledges to scrap the euro common currency and leave the European Union are long gone. — AFP

Cory Booker, 'You had our back'



Charles M Blow

The writer is a columnist for NYT

Less than an hour after the Senate confirmed Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court, Sherrilyn Ifill, a former president of the NAACP Legal Defence and Educational Fund, walked into Sen. Cory Booker's Capitol Hill office.

The two locked in a prolonged embrace, his husky frame draped over her smaller one, and she told him, "You had our back. You had our back. You had our back. You had our back," repeating the phrase like an incantation as Booker wept onto her shoulder.

That "our" contains multitudes. It invokes all those who have left this world, or remain in it, who live or lived with the gnawing truth that "I've always had the talent, but I never had a chance." That "our" is Black people. "Our" is Black women.

Jackson's achievement is her own, earned and deserved, but she rose on and was covered in the prayer power of millions of Black women. And while only Black women could fully access the ebullience in the air on Thursday, the joy and relief at finally being seen, there were also those in Washington who did what they could to offer comfort and support, particularly people in power, people like Booker, the only Black senator to ever sit on the Judiciary Committee when a Black nominee appeared for his or her confirmation hearing.

Jackson had many allies among the Democrats on the committee, but none of them distinguished themselves more as a salve and sanctuary for the embattled Jackson than Booker, the face that looked most like her own.

During the hearing, Booker delivered an impassioned speech in which he avowed, "You have earned this spot. You are worthy. You are a great American." Jackson pushed up her glasses and wiped away tears. Booker's affirmation had touched the tender spot.

I travelled to Washington on Thursday to see Booker and watch as history was made. Before the vote, we sat in his office, which is dominated by a nearly two-story wooden bookcase with a sliding ladder and brass hardware.

He contrasted Jackson's treatment during the hearing to Amy Coney Barrett's, calling Barrett's hearing "very respectful" and saying, "We all conducted ourselves in a way that I thought



President Joe Biden and Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson at the White House during the Senate's vote to confirm her nomination to the US Supreme Court, in Washington, on Thursday.

brought dignity to the process." Jackson's treatment, he said, "was not that." As he put it, "There was a level of disrespect and disregard that I had not seen before with other Supreme Court justices."

JACKSON'S ACHIEVEMENT IS HER OWN, EARNED AND DESERVED, BUT SHE ROSE ON AND WAS COVERED IN THE PRAYER POWER OF MILLIONS OF BLACK WOMEN

He saw on Thursday as "a day of healing," a reaffirming of Black people's faith in this country. "There's a lot of us who want to believe in the promise of America," he told me. "You get weary holding on to that dream. And you really want to hold on to any indication that your faith and your love for this nation is justified."

After our conversation, I took the Senate subway with him and his staff members, almost all women of colour, from his office building to the Capitol. From my seat in the gallery overlooking the Senate floor, I could watch the senators' faces as they voted, saying "yea" or "no" whenever their names were called. When Booker's name came up, he stood and shouted "YES,"

to giggles from the gallery. Sen. Ted Cruz seemed to grimace when Mitt Romney, who sat beside him, voted to affirm — one of only three Republicans to do so.

Tim Scott chatted with a neighbour incessantly until his name was called. He insouciantly voted "no," the only Black senator to do so, before leaving the room. Sen. Lindsey Graham stuck a thumbs-down through the door to the cloakroom.

Soon, voting was halted. Rand Paul wasn't in the chamber and hadn't voted. While the senators began to mill around, Booker worked the room, hugging, shaking hands, patting shoulders and chatting. At one point, he approached Vice-President Kamala Harris on the dais, and Raphael Warnock joined them, patting Booker on the shoulder. I could see Harris give each of the men a sheet of paper.

A Black woman sat down next to me and said of Paul's absence and the resulting delay, "This is passive-aggressive. He's here." Disrespectful, I thought. Soon he, too, reached a thumbs-down through the cloakroom door. I could see that he wasn't even wearing a suit jacket.

And then it was finished. History had been made. There, in a room encircled by the busts of the first vice-presidents — white men, some enslavers — carved from white marble, Jackson's confirmation was announced by the first vice-president who is neither white nor male.

The New York Times

Another Ramadhan, another opportunity



Ray Petersen
r.j.petersen52@gmail.com

The writer is a media consultant

I will never forget how starkly my selfish perspective of Ramadhan, as little more than an inconvenience, was sharply rebuffed by one of my students more than a decade ago. Saying, with a twinkle in her eye, “Doctor, it’s not a month of inconvenience, of difficulties, or problems. Even though we are all challenged, I have been taught to understand

that there are more than one and a half million seconds during this month, and there are those one and a half million opportunities to put right whatever is wrong, right! Correct?”

Ramadhan, the holiest of months for the believers, is a different experience for expatriates, as they, especially for the first time, are confused, awed and amused at how a people, a region, a faith and a way of life, prepare themselves for the month of commemoration of the very first revelation of the Holy Quran, to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It requires those of us of other faiths to respect not only the religious spirit, the social intent and the endless acts of faith that guide those of the way, during this month of elevated religious awareness,

but to respect the nature of what will become clear, is a unique shared experience.

The renowned Islamic scholar Nouman Ali Khan has written of, “A battle going on inside you for 30 days during Ramadhan, and for 30 days Allah gives you the power to win!” He brings home the seriousness

LET US ALL TREAT THIS TIME AS THE RAREST OF OPPORTUNITIES, THE DELICATE FLOWER THAT BLOSSOMS BEAUTIFULLY JUST ONCE A YEAR

with which the faith invests in Ramadhan, and its commitment to a deeply felt need for introspection born of an understanding that the closer one becomes to oneself, the more accepting and less judgemental one can reasonably expect to be of others. We expatriates must ‘cut some slack’, for those who make the commitment to Ramadhan, to demonstrate compassion and accept that with their normal eating, sleeping and relationship habits being turned inside out, and knowing the unique demands that temperature, humidity and longer daylight hours foist upon them, of course performance will suffer in the short-term, however the faithful investment will result in much more composed, confident and changed society, because Ramadhan changes them not for a month, but for a lifetime.

“None of us”, it is said, “is expected to be perfect during Ramadhan, but that should not prevent us from trying to be...” So, what has appeared from my personal deliberations during this time, is that we too have a God given opportunity for our own reflections, to demonstrate our own wisdom and understanding, and simply “chill out”, mentally, for these few weeks and perhaps embrace the spirit of Ramadhan by making a charitable offering within what is after all, our society too. Maybe doing or contributing to some charitable deed. These acts of charity, beyond those normally offered as Zakat, are known as Sadaqah, are a greatly appreciated and deeply significant feature of the Ramadhan, and any such contributions would be appreciated within a society that continues to embrace and include us.

Our world unfortunately, isn’t a place where we can rest on our laurels, for having seen off one task or responsibility, others loom immediately in the rearview mirror. We are, as one wit said, “The generation to be tested, not rested”, so we need all the wisdom, understanding, acumen, foresight, insight, intellect and prudence we can muster as we move forward. We need that assurance and confidence that Ramadhan grants us.

So, let us all treat this time as the rarest of opportunities, the delicate flower that blossoms beautifully just once a year, that we are inexorably drawn to, not by its blooms, but by that which cannot be seen, the fragrance, the scent, of all that is right and good, tempting, drawing us ever closer, ever more within reach... yet even as we savor its goodness, is drawn away for another year. Ramadhan Kareem.



THE HOLY MONTH

An elderly man stares at the dome of a mosque during the holy month of Ramadhan, in Syria’s northern city of Raqa, on Friday. – AFP

What is India doing in Ukraine?



Shashi Tharoor

The writer is a former UN under secretary-general and former Indian minister of state for external affairs and minister of state for human resource development, is an MP for the Indian National Congress

Towards the end of March, an unusual sequence of diplomatic visitors passed through India’s capital. First came Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg and US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland. They were followed by Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

The visits continued. Next to arrive were Gabriele Visentin, the European Union’s special envoy for the Indo-Pacific; Marcelo Ebrard, Mexico’s Foreign Minister; Jens Plötner, Foreign and Security Policy Adviser to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz; and Geoffrey van Leeuwen, Foreign Affairs and Defence Adviser to Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte. Last and by no means least were US Deputy National Security Adviser Daleep Singh, UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. There was also an online Indo-Australian summit.

The Ukraine war has exposed India’s strategic vulnerabilities in a tough neighbourhood as arguably nothing else could, raising fundamental questions about the country’s global position and regional security. But, paradoxically – as the slew of recent high-profile visits confirms – the conflict has increased India’s strategic importance and in the short-term, widened its options.

Has Prime Minister Narendra Modi used this room for manoeuvre well? The West, even as it seeks to line up India on its side vis-à-vis Ukraine, has signalled its understanding of India’s dependence on Russia for vital defence equipment and long history of close diplomatic relations with the Kremlin.

China has been somewhat surprised to find itself on the same page as India regarding the war. Both countries abstained in a series of United Nations votes condemning the Russian war and have maintained their communication channels with the Kremlin despite Western sanctions. China has been asking for restoration of “normal” bilateral relations with India, which have been in a deep freeze since violent border clashes in June 2020 killed 20 Indian soldiers. “The world will listen when China and India speak with one voice”, Wang reportedly stated on his recent visit to Delhi.

Russia, no doubt eager to thank India for “understanding” the Kremlin’s position, has offered the country economic incentives – notably, discounted oil and gas and affordable fertiliser – to dissuade it from changing its stance.

While India’s long-standing focus on “strategic autonomy” has kept it out of formal alliances, its broad geopolitical orientation has been veering towards a special partnership with the United States, notably in the Indo-Pacific. India is a member of the US-led “Quad”, an

informal grouping also including Japan and Australia that is widely seen as a way to check China’s regional ambitions.

India has also significantly increased its defence purchases from the West in recent years, and, with the US, is seeking to modernise its manufacturing base for military equipment. This process is likely to be accelerated by India’s current realisation that its dependence on Russian supplies imposes significant constraints, particularly in the event of a future border crisis with China.

THE UKRAINE WAR HAS EXPOSED INDIA’S STRATEGIC VULNERABILITIES AS ARGUABLY NOTHING ELSE COULD. PARADOXICALLY, THE CONFLICT HAS ALSO INCREASED THE COUNTRY’S IMPORTANCE AND IN THE SHORT-TERM, WIDENED ITS OPTIONS – BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAS SO FAR LARGELY FAILED TO CAPITALISE

Singh, the US Deputy National Security Adviser, pointedly warned of “consequences” should India breach the Western-led sanctions on Russia, and he urged India to recognise the diminishing value of its close relationship with the Kremlin. “The more Russia becomes China’s junior partner, the more leverage China gains over Russia, the less and less favourable that is for India’s strategic posture”, he told an Indian TV channel. “Does anyone think that if China breaches the Line of Actual Control, that Russia would now come to India’s defence? I don’t.”

China has been pushing the BRICS grouping (of which it is a member, along with Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as models of non-Western collaboration that can ensure a multipolar world order.

Russia, meanwhile, is aware that India’s refusal to condemn its war on Ukraine does not imply support. India has at no stage endorsed the Russian military campaign, and its language has notably hardened as the war has dragged on. Indian statements now pointedly refer to the inviolability of borders, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and the inadmissibility of resorting to force to resolve political disputes, even while calling on “both sides” to pursue diplomatic negotiations.

India has also been quick to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, sending 90 tonnes of relief materials. As the destruction has become more intense, its aid is likely to continue. India will gladly purchase essential supplies of fuel and fertiliser from Russia at discounted rates in roubles. But its diplomatic stance, and decreasing reliance on Russian defence equipment, mean that it is not completely in Russia’s camp.

Still, India’s calls for peace in Ukraine would have been more credible had it taken steps to bring about that outcome. Whereas countries like Turkey and Israel have been actively engaged in peace diplomacy, India has made no effort to play a mediating role, despite at one point sending four cabinet ministers to Europe to supervise the evacuation of Indian citizens from Ukraine. Even Lavrov suggested in Delhi that India could help “support” a mediation process.

India could have used the diplomatic attention it has been getting over Ukraine to carve out a role worthy of its aspirations for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Sadly, its ambitions seem to have been too modest.

India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, observed in 1946 that “India, constituted as she is, cannot play a secondary part in the world. She will either count for a great deal or not count at all.” Ukraine is a test case, and the jury remains out. Will today’s India count at all?

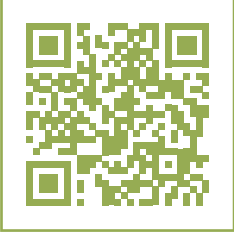
©Project Syndicate, 2021



Ukrainian policemen walk next to an engine of a cargo airplane in a hangar at Hostomel airfield, northwest of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, on Friday. – AFP

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



Dhofar blank Al Suwaiq to take OL top spot

MUSANNAH MOVE TO FOURTH AFTER BEATING AL NASR

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, APRIL 9

Dhofar emerged a comfortable 4-1 winner over Al Suwaiq late on Friday in the 18th week of Omantel League 2021-22. It was the eleventh victory for the Salalah giants in the league. The triumph helped Dhofar go top of the table with 38 points with a better goal average than Seeb and Al Nahda who also have 38 points. Seeb

were second and Al Nahda third in the table. At the Al Saada Sports Complex, Yazeed al Mashani took the lead for the hosts as he scored the opening goal while Al Suwaiq equalised after Mohammed al Mashari scored an own goal. Al Mashari made amends to his mistake by scoring the second goal for Dhofar ahead of the half-time. Former Oman captain Ahmed

Kanu received a red card and Al Suwaiq played with 10 players from the 58th minute. The hosts took the advantage as Hussain al Shahri struck two more goals to end the fixture at 4-1. It was the second successive loss for the northern Batinah team after they lost 1-0 against Al Nasr in the previous round. Dhofar, coached by Rasheed Jaber, will meet Al Musannah in the forthcoming round.

MUSCAT EDGE AL RUSTAQ
At the Seeb Stadium, Muscat snatched a crucial 2-1 win over opponents Al Rustaq to keep the capital city little away from the relegation zone. The win moved Muscat to tenth place at 19 points while Al Rustaq remained in the sixth position with 29 points. Qadir Faal and Shawqi al Raqadi scored the goals for Muscat while Sameh al Hamrashdi netted the consolation goal for Al Rustaq.

Muscat will face Al Suwaiq in the next round in a tight clash while Al Rustaq will take on Nizwa. Al Musannah registered their second successive victory over Al Nasr 2-1 at the Rustaq Sports Complex. The win secured Musannah's presence among top four teams as they now have 30 points while Al Nasr were dropped to fifth spot with a lesser goal average than Al Musannah. In earlier matches of 18th

week, Seeb edged Sohar 1-0 at Seeb Stadium on Thursday with Mohsin al Ghassani netting the all-important goal. Al Nahda continued their top show in the league as they defeated Al Ittihad 3-1, while Bahla and Saham match ended in a goalless draw and both teams shared the points. Nizwa registered an important victory over Oman club 2-0 to move slightly up than three teams in the danger zone.

Leclerc grabs pole ahead of Verstappen in Australia

MELBOURNE: Ferrari's Charles Leclerc claimed pole on Saturday for the Australian Grand Prix ahead of title rival Max Verstappen — and broke Lewis Hamilton's stranglehold on the Melbourne grid. World champion Verstappen's Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez is on the second row after coming in third ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris at Albert Park. Mercedes' Hamilton, who has been the pole-sitter eight times in Melbourne, including the last six in a row, will start an encouraging fifth. It is a second pole of the year for Monaco's Leclerc after the season-opening race in Bahrain, where he went on to win. He knocked out his rivals with a flying lap at the death of one minute 17.868, fractionally ahead of Red Bull's Verstappen, who won in Saudi Arabia two weeks ago. This was more evidence ahead of Sunday's third race of the campaign that they are the two to beat this season. "It felt good, even more because it's a track where I've

always struggled in the past, in Q3 I managed to put everything together so it feels great, very happy", said the 24-year-old Leclerc. "The car is nice to drive, everything is possible tomorrow. We need a good start." Verstappen had complained of oversteer and balance problems in the final practice ahead of qualifying and the Dutchman said he was still struggling despite being second-fastest. "I didn't really feel good in the car all weekend. I don't think there's been one lap where I've felt good in the car", said Verstappen, also 24. "We'll try to analyse it. This weekend has been all over the place. Happy to be second, but as a team we want more." While Mercedes' speed is improving, it still has problems with porpoising — bouncing too much at speed. But fifth was a major improvement for Hamilton, who only qualified 16th in Jeddah. His team-mate George Russell was sixth on Saturday. "Compared to yesterday and to



Charles Leclerc

the last race, today was a good day for me", said Britain's seven-time world champion Hamilton. "I almost got P4, which would

have been cool, but we'll be fighting for that position tomorrow." Both McLarens made the third part of qualifying for the first time

this season with Daniel Ricciardo coming seventh. Esteban Ocon in an Alpine was eighth and Carlos Sainz in the other Ferrari ninth. Veteran Fernando Alonso, who has been quick all weekend in the Alpine, had to settle for 10th after crashing at Turn 11, saying on the radio he couldn't shift down gears. **'HE HIT ME'**
It was a dismal day for four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel, who sent his Aston Martin into a wall in the final practice and managed just three laps in qualifying. He finished 18th to cap a miserable time for the German, who missed the opening two races of the year with Covid, suffered engine failure on Friday and was fined 5,000 euros (\$5,437) after riding a moped on the track. His team-mate Lance Stroll also endured a tough day. After crashing in third practice, his crew patched up the car and got him out with four minutes left of Q1. But before he completed a lap, he and Nicholas Latifi got tangled up, leaving debris from

the Canadian's Williams strewn on the track. "He just hit me man", Stroll said in an expletive-laden radio message, with Latifi responding: "I don't understand what he was doing, he wasn't looking in his mirrors. Car's destroyed." Stewards sided with Latifi and handed Stroll a three-place grid penalty. Not that it made any difference, as he was classified last anyway after failing to set a time. Perez topped Q2 from Sainz and Leclerc with Valtteri Bottas, the 2019 Melbourne winner, a casualty in his Alfa Romeo. The Finn's team-mate Zhou Guanyu also missed the cut for the top-10 shootout, as did Mick Schumacher in a Haas and AlphaTauri pair Pierre Gasly and Yuki Tsunoda. Verstappen was fastest in Q1 ahead of Perez. Along with Latifi, Stroll and Vettel, Kevin Magnussen in a Haas and Williams' Alex Albon, who already has a three-place grid drop after an incident in Saudi Arabia, also failed to get out of Q1. — AFP



Tewatia's late sixes blitz seals Gujarat win over Punjab

MUMBAI: Rahul Tewatia's two sixes off the last two balls of the run-chase against Punjab Kings handed a six-wicket win to Gujarat Titans in the Indian Premier League on Friday.

Tewatia was unbeaten on 13 off three balls as Hardik Pandya's Gujarat, who chose to field first after winning the toss, reached their 190-run target to win on the last ball of the chase.

Gujarat opener Shubman Gill was the game's top scorer — hitting 96 off 59 balls, with 11 fours and a six — before he fell to South African Kagiso Rabada in the second last over of the chase.

Gill struck key partnerships with debutant B Sai Sudharsan, 35 off 30 balls, and Pandya, who made 27 off 18. India's rookie left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh was the most effective Punjab bowler but went wicket-less in his four overs for 31 runs.

Rabada took two wickets — including opener Matthew Wade, who hit 6 off 7 balls — and gave up 35 runs in his four overs.

West Indian all-rounder Odean



Shubman Gill and Rahul Tewatia.

Smith leaked 19 runs off the last six balls of Gujarat's chase and went wicket-less in his three overs for 35 runs.

Earlier, a batting collapse restricted Punjab to 189-9 after some aggressive hitting by middle-order batters.

Punjab captain Mayank Agarwal scored five off nine and his opening partner Shikhar Dhawan hit 35 off 30 before falling to Afghanistan's Rashid Khan.

Khan took three wickets with his wily spin and only conceded 22 runs in his four overs.

Liam Livingstone, the most impressive Punjab batter, scored 64 off 27 balls and hit seven fours and four sixes before falling to Rashid.

Rashid also took Indian hitter M Shahrulkh Khan's scalp on 15.

Rookie Jitesh Sharma, 23 off 11 balls, and leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, unbeaten 22 off 14, gave some respectability to the Punjab score.

Gujarat debutant Darshan Nalkande took two wickets for 37 runs in his three overs.

Pandya and pacer Mohammad Shami both took one wicket each in their respective four over spells.

"It was Kings' game — some sympathy for them losing this," skipper Pandya said after the game. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES: Gujarat Titans 190-4 (Shubman Gill 96, Sai Sudharsan 35; Kagiso Rabada 2-35) beat Punjab Kings 189-9 (Liam Livingstone 64, Shikhar Dhawan 35; Rashid Khan 3-22) by 6 wickets.

OCT Ruwi, OCT Al Amerat emerge victorious

MUSCAT: Turf 1 of the Oman Cricket Academy played host to a thrilling encounter between OCT Al Hail 'A' and OCT Al Amerat in the All-Omani Tournament on April 8.

Electing to bat first in their first game of the competition, OCT Al Hail 'A' were bowled out for 112 in 19.2 overs. Opener Faris Said al Zadjali top-scored for his side with a 22-ball 25. Waleed Rahim al Balushi, Nadhir Ghulam and Abdul Ghani al Balushi were the others with notable contributions.

Anaya Allah and Khalid Moosa al Balushi were OCT Al Amerat's top performers with the ball and combined to pick up 7 wickets. Sulaiman Haider al Balushi and Nasser Haider al Balushi claimed the remaining ones.

In response, OCT Al Amerat lost both their openers early, but Ateel Yousuf al Balushi and Sulaiman Haider al Balushi steadied the innings with a 32-run partnership. Their dismissals in back-to-back deliveries of the 10th over very nearly proved terminal to their side's hopes of progressing in the tournament.

However, Rafeeq Mohammed Siyad al Balushi and Said Haider al Balushi played mature knocks to keep the contest alive.

With 9 runs needed off the final over, the first five balls produced 6 but Said Haider turned match-winner in the final delivery, depositing it in the stands to hand OCT Al Amerat a 5-wicket victory. Rafeeq and Said finished on individual scores of 32 and 22 respectively. Waleed Rahim al Balushi was the only bowler for OCT Al Hail 'A' with more than 1 scalp to his name.

MOHAMMED HITS 91

On the other ground, OCT Ruwi clinched a much more comfortable victory against OCT Al Mabela. They came out on top by a 71-run margin.

Electing to bat first, OCT Ruwi posted a first innings total of 188-2 - the highest in the tournament till date. That score was powered by the highest individual tally of the tournament - Mohammed al Balushi's unbeaten 67-ball 91.

Alongside Shuaib Ismail al



OCT Ruwi were dominant with the ball too, and their star while bowling was undoubtedly Zubair Ali Akabr al Balushi. He picked up 5 wickets in his 3.4 overs to go with a 23-run first innings cameo

Balushi, who made 56 runs himself in the match-defining 115-run partnership, Mohammed took the game away from OCT Al Mabela in brutal fashion.

Nabeel Mohd Boota and Asif al Balushi accounted for the two wickets that fell over the course of the first innings.

In response, OCT Al Mabela

folded for 117 with 2 balls to spare. Opener Zafarullah al Balushi led the scoring with 34 runs, with Abdullah al Balushi, Shareef al Balushi and Asif al Balushi chipping in with scores of 19, 12 and 12 respectively.

OCT Ruwi were dominant with the ball too, and their star while bowling was undoubtedly Zubair Ali Akabr al Balushi. He picked up 5 wickets in his 3.4 overs to go with a 23-run first innings cameo. Khalid Pir Baksh al Balushi, Shuaib Ismail al Balushi, Wasim Ismail Mohamed al Balushi and Imran al Balushi claimed the remaining ones.

BRIEF SCORES: OCT Al Hail 'A' 112 all out in 19.2 overs (Faris Said al Zadjali 25 (22b, 2x4); Anaya Allah 4-22; Khalid Moosa al Balushi 3-14) lost to OCT Al Amerat 116-5 in 20 overs (Rafeeq Mohammed Siyad al Balushi 32 (36b, 2x4); Waleed Rahim al Balushi 2-14) by 5 wickets. **OCT Ruwi 188-2 in 20 overs** (Mohammed al Balushi 91 (67b, 3x4, 4x6); Shuaib Ismail al Balushi 56 (37b, 8x4); Nabeel Mohd Boota 1-28) beat OCT Al Mabela 117 all out in 19.4 overs (Zafarullah al Balushi 34 (29b, 2x4, 2x6); Zubair Ali Akabr al Balushi 5-19) by 71 runs.

LOCAL FLAVOUR



Black Arrows MOCL runner-up



Pokri Warriors MOCL 2022 winners

POKRI WARRIORS LIFT MOCL CHAMPIONS CUP 2022

MUSCAT: Pokri Warriors lifted the MOCL Champions Cup 2022, by defeating Black Arrows by 73 runs in the third edition of the MOCL Grand Final conducted at the Challengers Cricket Club ground in Amerat.

Elected to bat, Pokri Warriors posted a huge total of 273 runs for the loss of 8 wickets in the allotted 20 overs. In return, Black Arrows were all out for 200 runs in 17.5 overs.

Vikas from Pokri Warriors scored 101 runs in 44 balls securing the man of the match award in the final.

Gururaj scored 56 runs from 26 balls and Sachin scored 65 runs from 21 balls.

Qamar Abbas from the Black Arrows took 4 wickets in 4 overs.

Shakeel Ahmed from Al Dasser won the player of the tournament award for his outstanding performance in the MOCL league.

Shah Alam from Kalinga Warriors won the best bowler award after taking 31 wickets in the tournament.

Ahmed Mujtaba from Kalinga Warriors won the best batsman award scoring 543 runs.

Jose Merbin Albert from Sarathi Sixes won the award for scoring three centuries in the tournament.

Mehaboob from Sarathi Sixes won the maximum sixes award (45 sixes).

Shakir Salim from Konkani Warriors won the emerging player award. Jatin Patil from Ghala Gladiators scored the highest individual score of 156 runs in the MOCL. The tournament was conducted in the spirit of fun for all cricket lovers in Oman.

The trophies and cash awards were given away by Robert, Natheer, Sreejith and Mansoor from MOCL organising committee.

MECC, AYAN AND NIGHT KINGS ADVANCE

MUSCAT: The Machine Care's MECC, Ayan International and Night Kings 11 qualified to Round 16 of Danube Ramadan tennex ball cricket tournament 2022, organised by Al Hail Cricket Team.

The tournament saw some exciting games in the fourth weekend where MECC won the toss and elected to field against Lankan Lions.

Lions scored 54-7 in 8 overs. MECC reached the target in 7.4 overs with the loss of 8 wickets. Abdul Razak was the man of match.

In the second match played between Night Kings XI and Desert Falcon, Desert Falcon won the toss and elected to bowl first. The Night Kings XI scored 50 for 5 wickets in 8 overs. Mubeen scored 22 runs in 10 balls. In reply, Desert Falcon fell 19 runs shot ending at 31-7 in 8 overs.

In the third match between Ayan International and NEI, Ayan XI won the toss and elected to bat first. They scored 75-4 in 8 overs. In reply, NEI scored 45-4 in 8 overs and lost the match by 30 runs. Bilal Khan was declared man of match after scoring 30 runs in 19 balls with 4 sixes.

Sheik Irfan from Danube presided as the chief guest and gave away



man of the match gifts to the players who performed well during matches.

Al Hail management said the crowd response during the tournament was real encouragement for them to organise such events. "The game has good following in the Sultanate of Oman. The tournament is an excellent opportunity to expose this sport to local Omani youths," the organisers said.

The tournament is sponsored by Al Danube, a top building materials company in Oman, and supported by Al Mudhish Company, Oman Oasis Company, Ayan International LLC, Cricket Cottage and Baab Al Hail Trading.

Oman well poised to keep lead



BILAL, JATINDER AND KHAWAR IN TOP FORM FOR TRI-SERIES

MUSCAT: The Oman men’s national team landed in the United Arab Emirates on Friday to participate in an ODI tri-series involving PNG and Scotland, starting on Saturday.

The matches will be played as part of the ICC Men’s CWC League 2. Oman currently lead the competition by 14 points, having played 10 games more than second-placed UAE.

Oman’s previous visit to the Emirates was a successful one. They won 3 of 5 games, with all

of them proving profitable for multiple Omani players, one such being Bilal Khan. He recorded career-best figures of 5-31 in the first fixture against the UAE and went on to reach and cross the 50-wicket mark for Oman in ODIs over the course of the tour.

Speaking on the milestone, he said, “All thanks to Allah. I remember it (the 50th scalp) well. It was the wicket of Stephen Baard, the Namibian batsman. I was extremely excited after picking up that wicket and am grateful to

head coach Duleep Mendis and all the support staff including our bowling coach Avishkar Salvi who helped me a lot. We put in a lot of hard work and it was great to see it rewarded. As a fast bowler playing for your country, you always have certain goals and this 50-wicket mark was my first one. Hopefully now I can continue in the same way and pick up 100.”

Leading up to Oman’s upcoming set of matches in the UAE, Duleep Mendis also expressed his satisfaction with his players’ recent

outings in Oman Cricket’s Premier Division and D10 league. Both of those domestic competitions witnessed historic performances from one of the country’s key players.

In Match 19 of the D10 league, Jatinder Singh blitzed his way to a 13-ball 50 in the second phase of play - the second-fastest ever in the T10 format. He went on to make 65 runs in 20 balls, a knock that included 2 fours and 8 massive sixes. Only Chris Gayle, Muhammad Waseem

and Mohammad Shahzad have bettered Jatinder’s feat in world cricket, with all of their fifties coming in 12 deliveries.

In the penultimate Premier Division match held at the Oman Cricket Academy on April 1, all-rounder Khawar Ali showcased his prowess with the ball to devastating effect. He single-handedly ripped through the opposition’s entire batting unit in the first innings, claiming 8 of 10 wickets on the way to bowling them out for a meagre 68 runs. Khawar set his side up for

a victory achieved in 5.4 overs and ended proceedings with figures of 8-18. All in all, going into these 4 games against PNG and Scotland, Oman have an individual in stunning recent form with both bat and ball.

The other players have also been operating at a top level on a consistent basis, a factor that bodes well for Oman’s quest to deliver cricket of the highest order in the UAE and consequently put one foot in the 2023 ICC ODI World Cup Qualifiers.

AS'SIR CONTEST

2 Toyota Yaris, 2022
YM, S/D 1.5 Classic

VALUABLE
PRIZES
UP TO RO
35000

For participation
90458
Send to SMS

Presented by
Nada Al Balushi

MCT **13:00**

Comes through General Radio & Shaba Radio

@ShababRadioOman

@GeneralRadio



Banking Services Made Special to Suit Your World

BankDhofar provides you with a host of innovative products, services that are specially designed to suit your needs and exceed your expectations.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/BankDhofarEng>

Al Riadah Priority Banking Services

Al Riha Special Banking Services

Ladies Banking Services

Youth Banking Services

Expat Banking Services

Children Banking Services

بنك ظفار

BankDhofar

the best bank for you

24781111

www.bankdhofar.com

Deal signed for Oman’s first penicillin project

PHARMA LANDMARK: Pen-G, jointly owned by MHD LLC and Ali bin Moosa al Balushi, is a state-of-the-art fermentation plant for the manufacture of key pharmaceutical start-up material at the Sohar Freezone

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 9

Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC (MHD LLC), one of the largest and pioneering business houses in the Sultanate of Oman, has signed an agreement with Ali bin Moosa al Balushi, National Bank of Oman (NBO), and Sohar Port and Freezone for the establishment of a first-of-its-kind pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region – Penicillin General Integrated Industrial Company (Pen-G).

Under the agreement, Pen-G will be jointly owned by MHD LLC and Ali bin Moosa al Balushi and will establish a state-of-the-art fermentation plant for the manufacture of key pharmaceutical start-up material at the Sohar Freezone. NBO will be participating as the primary bank through which the project is being financed.

The signing ceremony took place on April 6, 2022, at the Pen-G Head Office in Ghala. Present at the signing ceremony were Ali bin Moosa al Balushi; Mohammed bin Abdullah al Kharusi - Chief Executive Officer, MHD LLC; Abdullah bin Zahran al Hinai, Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Oman; and Omar bin Mahmood al Mahrizi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar Freezone and Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Sohar Port.

Also in attendance at the event were other members of the executive and senior management of each of the four companies.

Commenting on the project, Mohammed al Kharusi said, “As of 2020, the global pharmaceutical industry generated revenues of \$1.27 trillion, representing significant growth over the past two decades. Our objective with Pen-G is twofold.

First, we would like to officially put Oman on the world map for raw materials for start-up medicine and enter this lucrative industry, and second, we would like to further our goal of establishing ourselves as a key contributor to Oman Vision 2040 and, by extension, to the government’s national diversification efforts.

Furthermore, our location at the Sohar Freezone, right next to the largest industrial port in the country, provides us with ready access to global trade routes between Asia and Europe for both acquisition of raw materials as well as export of our product.”

The Pen-G fermentation plant will be the first of its kind in the region and has been initially designed to have two blocks for the manufacture



Penicillin G represents value addition at the raw material stage of antibiotic medicine manufacturing – an area currently dominated by China. Once completely operational, this plant will cater to the demand for Penicillin GK raw material amounting to nearly 10 per cent of the world’s consumption

ALI BIN MOOSA
AL BALUSHI

of Penicillin-G and 6-APA (Amino Penicillanic Acid) respectively.

These are key start-up materials for the most widely used group of antibiotics, penicillin, and cephalosporins. There are also plans to eventually add a further block for the manufacture of key start-up materials for Erythromycin.

Furthermore, the plant has been designed from the ground up to comply wholly with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) regulations, ensuring all products manufactured are to global standards.

The project was the brainchild of Ali bin Moosa al Balushi, a proven, dynamic, multi-disciplined project director and programme manager. He has been a banker for close to two decades before he plunged into the pharmaceutical business, implementing, and providing complete project life-cycle management services for various pharma projects in India and Oman.

Commenting on the Pen-G project, he said, “This project is a core part of my constantly evolving dream to build value in Oman in the Pharma sector.

Penicillin G represents value addition at the raw material stage of antibiotic medicine manufacturing

– an area currently dominated by China. Once completely operational, this plant will cater to the demand for Penicillin GK raw material amounting to nearly 10 per cent of the world’s

consumption.”

Omar bin Mahmood al Mahrizi said, “The growth of the Sohar pharma cluster is an important step forward in the development of the Port and Freezone with far-reaching benefits to the local community, both in terms of investment and access to the finished product.

This pharma project, the second project after our animal vaccination facility, will add significant value to all three of our objectives. We are confident that the plant operated by Penicillin General Integrated Industrial Company will provide the impetus for further investment in the pharmaceutical industry and the potential for Sohar to become the main hub for the industry in the region.”

تاجير للتحويل

Taageer Finance

Co. S.A.O.G

Board of Directors’ Report for the year ended 31 December 2021

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Taageer Finance Company SAOG, I am pleased to present the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2021.

Performance Summary

As per the financial results for the year 2021 the total Income for the year ended December 31, 2021 is RO 18.9 million as compared to RO 17.9 million for the year ended December 31, 2020 registering an increase of 5.6%. The Interest Expenses for the year 2021 stood at RO 8.23 Million as compared to RO 8.43 million for the year 2020 (reduction of 2.37%). The Company registered Profit of RO 5.86 Million before Expected Credit Losses (ECL) charge and taxation for the year 2021 as against RO 4.49 Million for the previous year an increase of 30.51%. The Net Profit after ECL charge of RO 2.854 million and RO 459k Taxation stood at RO 2.543 Million for the year 2021 vis-à-vis RO 2.070 Million for the year 2020 an increase of 22.85%. Gross portfolio registered a growth of 3.70% over 2020 and stood at RO 252 Million as on 31st December 2021 (Dec 2020 RO 243 million). The cumulative borrowings including unsecured non-convertible bonds stood at RO 136 million (2020 – RO 129 million).

Cumulative provisions as at Dec 2021 is RO 20.05 million as per IFRS 9 requirements. Allocation to ECL has increased by 41.22% during 2021 as compared to the previous year reflecting prudence judgement on ECL.

Issue of Unsecured Non-Convertible Subordinated Bonds

Focusing on the need for diversification of funding avenues, Taageer Finance successfully issued 2 year Unsecured Non-convertible Subordinated Bonds worth RO 13.232 million through private placement which was oversubscribed by 32.32%.

Impact of COVID-19 and Taageer’s measures

Financial institutions across the world are continuously monitoring and making efforts to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are working to understand the immediate challenges to society and economies, and the long-term impact on the interconnected financial system. They are using their expertise to help themselves and their customers to make good decisions to support the business needs in a highly volatile operating environment prevailing currently. Your Company implemented the Supreme Committee guidelines on Covid Protocols and ensured that the entire staff and their families are fully vaccinated. Created remote work platforms / staff rotation to ensure continuity in operations.

Your Company initiated various measures to facilitate deferment requests received from customers within the guidelines stipulated by the Central Bank of Oman. Pro-active measures to ensure healthy and safety of the employees and the customers were initiated with the guidance of the decisions announced by the Supreme Committee. The Company has ensured that the employees and their families were fully vaccinated.

Taageer is taking all initiatives to swiftly enhance its fintech capabilities and implement digital transaction channels. It aims to offer a complete digital experience to its customers.

Change in the Composition of the Board

During the year 2021 at the Annual General Meeting held on 24 March 2021, Mr. Ali Mohammed Ali Al Farsi and Mr. Omar Mohamed Nasser Al Rasbi were elected as Directors. Mr. Hussain Mohamed Redha and Mr. Engr. Ahmed Hamed Al Subhi resigned from the Board.

Proposed Dividends

The company has distributed dividends consistently year on year since the commencement of business. The Board of Directors are pleased to recommend a cash dividend of 3 baizas per share (RO 760,770/-) and 2 baizas per share as stock dividend (RO 507,180) for the financial year 2021, for approval by the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting to be held on March 27, 2022.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

During the year the company kept its spirit of contributing to the community by taking several initiatives to support CSR activities in the areas of Education and Health. As a part of the company's commitment to disaster relief an amount of RO 50,000 was pledged as contribution to Oman Charitable Organization towards relief and rehabilitation of areas severely affected by tropical cyclone during Q4 2021. The contribution will be placed for ratification of shareholders at the Annual General Meeting scheduled to be held on 27 March 2022.

Corporate Governance

Company continued its commitment of adhering to the highest standards of Compliance and Corporate Governance. As elicited more elaborately in the Corporate Governance Report, we assure that the Company has in place policies and procedures that are commensurate to the operations and established internal controls.

Future Outlook

The infrastructure sector has a role to play in paving the way for societies towards economic recovery, reinforced by sustainable and resilient growth. Oman has approved its annual budget for 2022, allocating 12.13 billion Omani riyals (\$31.5bn) for spending, with a focus on basic public services, from health to social support, stimulating investment. This certainly reflects a positive outlook and business units are effervescent with energy and enthusiasm.

Rating agencies have improved the sovereign ratings following positive movements in key fiscal metrics, including government debt, GDP and the budget deficit.

With its strong leadership and skilled management team, the Company is well placed to maintain its high standards in doing business through technological innovation, liability management, process automation. With the expected improvement in the economy and the customer centric approach being adopted by the Company the year 2022 looks promising.

Acknowledgement

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to express sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik bin Taimour for his vision and wise leadership.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation and acknowledgement for the guidance and support from the Central Bank of Oman, Capital Market Authority and Muscat Securities Market. We are also grateful to our shareholders, bankers, dealers and customers for their continued trust, confidence and support. Finally, the Board would like to appreciate and thank the management and the staff for all their hard work and efforts.

On Behalf of the Board of Directors

Rashid bin Saif Al Saadi
Chairman

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2021 RO'000	2020 RO'000
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	16,655	2,412
Net investment in finance leases, working capital finance and factoring receivables	165,064	170,154
Other receivables and prepayments	582	441
Deferred tax asset – net	89	88
Vehicles, equipment and right-of-use assets	440	771
Statutory deposit	250	250
Total assets	183,080	174,116
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
LIABILITIES		
Creditors, accruals and other liabilities	2,216	2,480
Bank overdrafts and short-term loans	60,603	65,496
Unsecured non-convertible bonds	13,351	-
Tax payable	471	377
Corporate and security deposits	9,820	8,645
Long-term loans	52,272	55,314
Total liabilities	138,733	132,312
EQUITY		
Share capital	25,359	25,359
Legal reserve	5,395	5,141
IFRS 9 impairment reserve	2,222	2,222
Fair value reserve	(441)	(441)
Retained earnings	11,812	9,523
Total equity	44,347	41,804
Total equity and liabilities	183,080	174,116
Net assets per share (baizas)	175	165

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2021 RO'000	2020 RO'000
Income		
Finance income	17,641	16,802
Interest expense	(8,228)	(8,426)
Net finance income	9,413	8,376
Other operating income	1,247	1,035
	10,660	9,411
Expenses		
Operating expenses	(4,366)	(4,506)
Depreciation	(438)	(419)
Impairment in net investment in finance leases, working capital finance and factoring receivables	(2,854)	(2,021)
	(7,658)	(6,946)
Profit before taxation	3,002	2,465
Taxation	(459)	(395)
Profit for the year	2,543	2,070
Basic and diluted earnings per share (baizas)	10.03	8.16

Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them in Arabic or English as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.

Bank Nizwa signs first sustainable finance agreement

MUSCAT: Highlighting the far-reaching financial and societal benefits of integrating sustainable finance into business, Bank Nizwa recently signed its first sustainable finance agreement with Shanfari Special Projects LLC (SSP). With Hutchison Ports Sohar commencing construction work to develop its new solar-powered integrated inspection facility, SSP was trusted with the responsibility of installing the scanning equipment for the project.

Bank Nizwa's sustainable finance agreement will play an instrumental role in supporting SSP to source its requirements from Rapiscan, the chosen vendor for the project.

The agreement was signed by Khalid al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa and Shaikh Nizar

al Shanfari, Chairman of SSP in presence of R Narasimhan, General Manager Wholesale at Bank Nizwa and Khalid al Barwani, Deputy General Manager Wholesale Banking among other senior officials.

An integral component of the project is the installation of a solar energy system on the new infrastructure, the existing buildings, and the car parking areas. This will be done to supplement the power requirements and will result in the reduction of approximately 5,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year. This is a significant step towards achieving the sustainable development goals of the country.

"As a sister company of the Shanfari Group of Companies, SSP has been a significant



contributor to the nation's goals and mirrors values that are quite similar to ours. We are indeed delighted to join hands with such a reputable company to promote the logistics sector through sustainable financing solutions.

The project's green concept of supplementing its energy requirements through renewable, clean sources of energy is in line

with Oman Vision 2040. As such, Bank Nizwa is deeply invested in its success," said Khaled al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa.

"With the country's renewed commitment to achieving net-zero emissions and the continuous endeavours to foster a green and circular economy, sustainable financing is gaining increasing traction in the market.

As a Sharia-compliant bank that places immense importance on inclusivity, ethicality, and transparency, Bank Nizwa has remained ahead of the curve to spearhead sustainable finance initiatives in the country."

Embracing the latest advancements in innovation and container scanning capabilities, the modern inspection facility, valued at \$30 million, will be a part of the terminal development plans to enhance the inspection services for inbound and outbound containers and provide transformational clearing processes. The project will facilitate the quicker clearance of both normal and refrigerated containers and aid in the express movement of goods. This will also boost Oman's ranking in

the Logistics Performance Index while contributing to the ongoing development of the national economy.

Shaikh Nizar al Shanfari, said, "At SSP, we endeavour to be able to offer exceptional service, dependability and quality to our customers around the world. Our projects exemplify this commitment and we continue to move forward with conviction to deliver modern day solutions that support the environmental, and sustainability goals of the Sultanate of Oman. We are thankful to Bank Nizwa for supporting us in this journey as we aim to emerge as one of Oman's largest industrial and services conglomerates, and a valuable contributor to the development of the nation's infrastructure."

Get 15% cash reward on salary transfer to ahli islamic

MUSCAT: Adhering to its commitment to enhance the spirit of Ramadhan with valuable and relevant rewards for customers, ahli islamic has announced an increase in its one-time cash reward on salary transfers. Customers can now expect to get as much as 15% of the monthly pay, when transferring their salaries to the bank.

Designed to help patrons realise their dreams and to exceed their expectations with enriching experiences, the cash reward scheme, which will run all through the holy month of Ramadhan, will provide a maximum amount that will not exceed RO 500. It will be offered in accordance with the bank's terms and conditions.

Yousuf bin Salim al Rawahi, Deputy General Manager and Head of ahli islamic said, "The blessed month of Ramadhan reflects the spirit of generosity and kindness, which is what we want to spread through our offer. With the launch of this offer during this auspicious occasion we want to demonstrate



our keenness to provide innovative banking solutions that suit the changing needs of our customers. We believe in providing initiatives that add value to our customers' banking experiences, and, towards this end, we have amplified the offer of cash reward when transferring salary. We expect this special offer to strengthen and support our relationship with existing customers, and help us forge stronger bonds with new customers. Our mission to provide exclusive and diverse promotions that support our customers' lifestyles — while helping them keep pace with global trends — is ongoing."

Bank Muscat's Asalah referral scheme offers up to RO 2,000 to Priority Banking customers

MUSCAT: In line with the bank's vision "To serve you better, everyday", Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has launched its special Asalah referral scheme for 2022. The scheme will run till December 31, 2022, and offers attractive prizes to existing Asalah Priority Banking Customers.

All that they have to do is successfully refer new customers to Asalah Priority Banking. A reward of RO 100 per successful referral will be paid out for each referral once the referred customer meets all eligibility criteria for a minimum of three months after opening an Asalah account with the bank. Existing customers can win up to RO 2,000 by making up to 20 successful referrals during the year.

Customers having a monthly salary of RO 5,000 or those who can maintain a savings deposit of RO 30,000 are eligible for Asalah Priority Banking. To provide



referrals, the referral form available on the bank's website should be filled up and emailed to AsalahReferral@bankmuscat.com. The salary/deposit transfer of the referral should be credited within a maximum of 30 days from the date of referral, for the referral to be eligible for participation in the scheme. Cash rewards of RO 100 each will be credited directly to both the referrer's and referee's account for maintaining the eligibility criteria during the 3-month review period.

Speaking about the scheme, Amjad bin Iqbal al Lawati, Deputy General Manager – Customer Segments, said: "As a prolific innovator of banking

products and services in the Sultanate of Oman, Bank Muscat has always been customer-centric bank. We are very happy to once again offer guaranteed rewards for successful referrals and encourage all existing Asalah Priority Banking customers to use this offer and win great rewards."

Asalah customers enjoy a range of unrivalled benefits including access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 39 Asalah Centres across Oman and a dedicated 24/7 Asalah Call Centre. Exclusive lifestyle benefits include the Asalah Entertainer App, which has more than 3,500 "Buy 1, Get 1 Free" offers in Oman and at international

destinations as well as rewards of indulgence and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and the beauty and wellness segments.

The Asalah Debit Card offers access to 50 lounges worldwide and has a higher ATM withdrawal limit of RO 1,000. Asalah VISA Signature credit cardholders can enjoy airport lounge access at more than 1,000 lounges worldwide, and a 24/7 global concierge service.

The Credit Card also offers 1% cashback on purchases as well as free multi-trip travel insurance for customers and their direct family members. Cardholders can also enjoy complimentary chauffeur service to and from the Muscat International Airport.

Asalah customers also enjoy access to an integrated wealth management platform that allows them to invest in global asset classes through a single touchpoint. They also get the latest updates and reports on local and international investment opportunities.

Scratch and win Kia Cerato this Ramadhan

MUSCAT: Own a Kia Cerato and get a rewarding opportunity to scratch and win 2 Kia at one time. Additional scratch & win prizes include, Win your purchased Kia back, win all-new Sportage, win up to 20 per cent on display price, win periodic service up to 100,000 kms and VAT is on us. The campaign is valid until May 1, 2022. (Conditions apply. Please visit Kia showroom for details.)

Eye-catching from any angle, the Cerato Supreme utilises full LED headlights which appear as slender lines with the radiator grille to underline the redesigning of the face of the model, defining the car's sporty exterior. At the rear, strong horizontal lines add a bold appearance with depth to the fluid exterior design.

Take the wheel of the stylish new Kia Cerato and start your day feeling invigorated, relaxed and capable of anything with a powerful 150 HP 2.0L Euro 4 engine that is paired to a 6-speed automatic transmission. The Cerato is also available with



1.6L, 126 HP Euro 4 engine which is paired to a 6-speed automatic transmission.

Inside, the Cerato exhibits modern simplicity and practical luxury with a range of features that include a high-resolution 8-inch display screen and a 4.2-inch colour TFT LCD cluster for an improved, convenient driving experience. The model also features rear AC vents, Alloy Pedal, Paddle Shifter, Power Sunroof, Remote Engine Start, providing advanced solutions to

everyday inconveniences.

As a key priority in its design, the Cerato's Advanced Safety technologies satisfy the need for both safety and convenience with best-in-class features to support drivers in life.

The latest model incorporates its new Electronic Parking Brake and Auto Hold braking systems to support secure parking. Equipped with Electronic Stability Program (ESP), Anti-Lock brake System (ABS), Driver & Front Passenger Airbags, Rear Parking Assist System, Tyre Pressure Monitoring

System and more to ensure a smooth driving experience on the road.

Additionally the Cerato Supreme is also equipped with Chrome Coated Beltline, Leather Wrapped Steering Wheel and TGS Gear Knob, Front Parking System, Rear View Camera, Auto Light Control, Drive Mode Select, Side Repeater Lamp in Outside Mirror, Chrome Radiator Grille and more.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers. Excellent product attributes and unmatched facilities easily ensure their absolute satisfaction, every mile of the way. No wonder then that Reliable International Automotive has been ranked amongst the top Kia distributors worldwide and has been honoured with prestigious accolades including the 'Good Partnership award', 'Family Like Care' Service award', and 'Kia 'Distributor of Distinction' award.

Get free Shahid this Ramadhan with Shahry Fibre and 5G



MUSCAT: Binge watching your favourite TV series is a Ramadhan tradition we all look forward to. That's why Ooredoo is offering its customers a free three-month subscription to popular streaming app, Shahid, especially for Ramadhan.

Customers subscribing to, or upgrading, their Shahry Omanuna plans can enjoy a range of exclusive content including Shahid Originals, premieres and the latest Arabic movies, with no ad interruptions, any time and on any device. Meanwhile, those

signing up to a new Fibre or 5G plan can get Shahid VIP, with even more content for the whole family. Watch the latest Ramadhan series, episodes from MBC, the hottest premieres and pre-theatrical movies, or catch up on classic dramas, comedies and documentaries from across the region – all in true HD.

Fibre or 5G Home Internet can be ordered by messaging WhatsApp on 95103000 with the house location and Civil ID/Residence ID, by calling 1514, or by visiting Ooredoo.om.

New mining tender targets rich potash reserves in Oman



(Image for illustration only)

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, APRIL 9

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals has invited local and international mining companies with experience in mining projects to participate in a new tender round targeting rich potash reserves in the Sultanate of Oman.

Potash salts, which are primarily used in the production of fertiliser, among other commodities, are found in four blocks – 53-A, 53-B, 53-C and 51-D – covered in the latest tender round.

Three of the blocks are located in the Um A'Samim sabkhah on the Sultanate of Oman's border with Saudi Arabia. Distributed across the Wilayat of Ibri in Al Dhahirah Governorate, they comprise Block 53-A (covering 3,719 sq km, Block 53-B (3,823 sq km) and Block 53-C (5,067 sq km). Block 51-D, covering an area of 567 sq km, is located in Wilayat of Mahout overlooking the Arabian Sea.

According to ThermoFisher,

a key reference source, most of the world's potash comes from Canada, with the largest deposits located in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. Russia and Belarus rank as the second and third highest potash producers.

In the United States, 85 per cent of potash is imported from Canada, with the remaining produced in Michigan, New Mexico, and Utah.

Last month, the ministry awarded a total of 12 exploration-to-mining concession agreements – the largest such mining-related concession awards – Minerals Development Oman (MDO), an affiliate of Oman Investment Authority (OIA). Covering a total area of 21,480 sq km, the concessions target a number of potential minerals, mainly strategic minerals (metallic) such as Copper, Gold, and Chromium.

The landmark pacts are part of a new strategy adopted by the ministry to support the development of the minerals sector through concession agreements.

Consultant sought for Oman's \$1 bn Waste-to-Energy project

CONRAD PRABHU

@conradprabhu

Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP), the sole procurer of new power generation capacity, has invited qualified consultants to bid for its contract for the provision of technical advisory services linked to the development of the first Waste-to-Energy (WTE) project in the Sultanate of Oman.

A Request for Proposals (RfP) issued by OPWP, a member of Nama Group, comes on the heels of last month's key agreement signed with Oman Environment Services Holding Company (be'ah), which operates and manages the country's municipal waste sector.

The pact enables be'ah, as the primary source of municipal waste as feedstock for the proposed WTE project, and OPWP – the procurer of new capacity – to work together to achieve the successful delivery of the landmark venture.

Last month's agreement revives stalled efforts to utilise the huge amounts of high calorific municipal waste accumulating in landfills across the country as feedstock in the first Independent Power Project (IPP) of its kind.

Those efforts were stymied by the recent global economic downturn, compounded by



(Image for illustration only)

The pact enables be'ah, as the primary source of municipal waste as feedstock for the proposed WTE project, and OPWP – the procurer of new capacity – to work together to achieve the successful delivery of the landmark venture.

the coronavirus pandemic, which resulted in, among other impacts, an unprecedented decline in electricity demand growth in the Sultanate of

Oman.

However, with the Omani government looking to actively harness renewables, including municipal waste, as part of its diversification away from natural gas for power generation, the WTE scheme is back on the front-burner.

This time around, OPWP and be'ah are looking at a significantly ramped up 130 – 150 MW capacity plant, up from the approximately 50 MW scheme envisaged earlier.

For state-run be'ah – part of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) – the WTE project will also contribute significantly to

its circular economy strategy.

By contributing around 4,500 tonnes per day of municipal waste as feedstock for the project, be'ah hopes to reduce the carbon footprint associated with its landfills.

Over the roughly 35-year operational life of the project, an estimated 50 million tonnes of municipal waste are expected to be channelised towards the WTE project, thereby contributing to the Sultanate of Oman's carbon abatement targets as well.

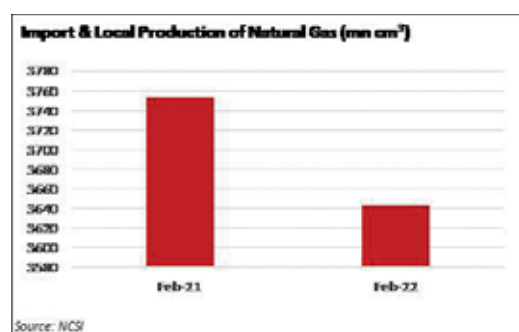
An award for the technical advisory services contract will be announced by June 30, 2022, according to OPWP.

MSX closes the week marginally higher

MUSCAT: MSX30 Index ended the week higher by 0.10 per cent. All indexes ended the week higher except for the financial index. The financial Index closed lower by 0.45 per cent. Service index and industrial index ended higher by 0.58 per cent and 1.41 per cent respectively.

The MSX Shariah Index closed higher by 0.58 per cent. National Life and General Insurance Company SAOG (NLGIC) announced that it has entered into agreements to fully acquire Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Middle East BSC (RSA Middle East).

The acquisition is subject to the respective regulatory and NLGIC's shareholders approvals. NLGIC will execute the transaction in two parts: (i) Acquiring 50.00002 per cent shareholding in RSA Middle East from Sun Alliance Insurance Overseas LTD, a fully owned entity of Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Limited; and (ii)



Exchange the remaining shares of RSA Middle East, owned by reputable Saudi shareholders, for new shares to be issued by NLGIC. Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles Company board of directors have decided to go ahead with the second phase of expansion plan in line with earlier disclosure dated December 20, 2020 wherein the company had indicated that the expansion plan would be executed in two phases.

The second phase of expansion is in addition to the first phase which is under way and is expected to be commissioned by May, 2022.

The second phase will add another 3.5 million sqm of tile manufacturing and is expected to be commissioned around March, 2023 taking our total capacity to around 24 million sqm per annum.

The Sultanate of Oman's consumption of natural gas dropped by 3 per cent year-on-year in February 2022, compared to the same period of last year. Total production of natural gas declined to 3,643 million cubic metres (mncm) in February 2022 against 3,753 mncm in the corresponding period of 2021.

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) says it is exploring the establishment of two new subsidiaries in line with its goal to evolve into a world-class bourse ahead of its planned listing on the Omani exchange in about five years.

(Courtesy: U-Capital)

Majan Electricity holds workshop for contractors



MUSCAT: Majan Electricity Company conducted a workshop for contractors who participated in Unit Rate tender for Al Dhahirah and North Batinah governorates. The workshop aimed at clarifying the tender terms, conditions and requirements.

Further, the team responded to contractors' inquiries

regarding the tender and clarified all the queries in regard to the topic.

This initiative will contribute to acceleration of the implementation of network extension works to customers and network improvements and ensure on-time implementation of projects with higher quality and efficiency.

Oman's first 'buy & mill' food mart opened in Suhar

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 9

Well-known spices brand Shahi Foods and Spices LLC has recently launched its flagship food mart – 'Mashhoor' in Suhar, under the auspices of Shaikh Saif bin Muhanna al Hinai, Wali of Suhar. The store is the Sultanate of Oman's first buy and mill food mart, that aims to elevate grocery shopping experience in the country.

The main factor that differentiates the food mart from others is the in-house custom milling and roasting facility.

Customers can choose from a range of top-grade whole spices and whole grains sourced by Shahi from across the world and get it milled according to their preferred consistency.

Mashhoor is equipped with the latest, top of the class milling technology that has water-cooled grinders to ensure zero per cent loss in flavour and nutrients, enabling customers to get the perfect blend with its authentic aroma intact.

Customers can also blend spices and grains as per their requirement. Shahi has the Middle East's largest coffee processing facility and



produces the best kahwa blends in the region.

At Mashhoor, coffee aficionados can custom roast and blend their

favourite coffee.

Choose from the range of top-grade coffee beans sourced by Shahi from major coffee producing countries in the world.

The store provides some of the best blends of coffee by Shahi, moreover, the beans can be roasted to the customer preference - light roast, dark roast, extra dark roast, fine powder or coarse powder. And get it blended with spices like cardamom, saffron, cloves, and cinnamon.

Mashhoor also stores the whole range of Shahi products – spices, pulses, lentils, nuts, dates and dried fruits – premium quality

meats and poultry products, confectioneries, beverages and other general grocery items.

Ibrahim bin Mohammed bin Nasar al Rawahi, the Chairman of Shahi Foods and Spices LLC said: "We're incredibly proud that the quality of our products and trust in our brand has culminated in the opening of our flagship mart 'Mashhoor' in Suhar.

Alongside fresh produce and everyday grocery items, it is the store's custom grinding and roasting facilities that are going to provide an elevated experience to those residing and working in the Suhar vicinity."

Tejarah Talks: Radical transparency



SHATHA AL MASKIRY

Tejarah Talks

BUSINESS STORIES ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER

We met up with Shatha Al Maskiry, Managing Director, Protiviti Oman and Tejarah Talks panellist to explore corporate immune systems, fearless Gen Z, leadership, zero tolerance policies, caring for employees and more.

What is corporate culture?

Corporate culture is the collective beliefs, attitudes and behaviours found in the workplace that are shaped, encouraged, discouraged, tolerated or rejected depending on how well it is aligned with the personal values of employees. The stronger that alignment, the more energised and committed employees will be towards a shared and purposeful goal.

A great reference on this is Michael Watkin's 2013 Harvard Business Review article 'What Is Organisational Culture? And Why Should We Care?' where he says: "culture is the organisation's immune system". I firmly believe the stronger the culture, the stronger its resistance to toxic behaviour.

How do you see Gen Z re-shaping Omani corporate culture?

Gen Z are fearless, ambitious, restless, proud and values driven. They perform best when their beliefs are aligned with company values. They expect autonomy, transparency and a sound work-life balance.

They enjoy personalising their career trajectory, getting reskilled, prefer hybrid working arrangements, continuous feedback on their performance and a psychologically safe space to experiment with ideas. They also seek out employers who foster diversity, inclusion and equity.

Going forward, workplaces will have to understand the needs of Gen Z and embed them in robust



policies and processes.

As long as humans are involved in doing the work, culture change will be messy. Is that a fair assessment?

Culture evolves based on a company's history, development and transformation. Changing culture is a big undertaking when organisations have been around for a while and it is challenging when the goals, roles, values and processes are not aligned.

When corporate culture does not match the values of its people, toxic behaviour emerges and seeps into the work environment so it is important not to rush change but be bold and courageous when leading such change. Know the current state of affairs, be clear on where you want to go, communicate authentically to engage and inspire everyone - leadership storytelling is highly effective.

Be responsive, build a roadmap, track progress and reward positive

shifts. Radical transparency is key.

How can companies keep their culture front and centre?

Leadership has by far the largest and most direct effect on company culture. In fact, they have a responsibility to demonstrate the beliefs of the company and reinforce behaviours that reflect those values.

What does that mean in practice? Well, it means an open door policy, collaboration, team meetings and family gatherings, celebrating employee achievements and contributions.

It also means setting non-negotiable benchmarks, maintaining high standards in the hiring process — internal and external — providing continuous learning and development opportunities, accommodating staff needs, respecting and championing diverse perspectives, shaping rich work experiences that change beliefs and most importantly having a zero-tolerance policy for

harassment, bullying and unethical conduct.

What three cultural adaptations have emerged since the onset of the pandemic that Omani businesses can use as a source of strength and innovation for the future?

We have seen so many cultural adaptations emerge as a result of the pandemic but three that stand out for me are:

- o Continuous communication from leadership to foster resilience, agility and transparency.
- o Prioritising learning, innovation, digitalisation and continuous change.
- o Heightened emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion.

How can Omani companies integrate well-being, compassion, social connection and mind-body practices to build positive workplaces?

According to a recent Aetna International study, the stigma surrounding mental well-being

means that 47 per cent of employees in the UK, US, Singapore and Middle East are "unlikely" to take time off due to work-related stress.

Yet we know heightened stress levels negatively affect a company's productivity, creativity and problem-solving skills. Indeed, a WHO-led study estimates that depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$1 trillion each year in lost productivity.

Thankfully, building a company culture that prioritises mental well-being can go a long way towards avoiding these workplace problems.

Clearly, all aspects of wellness — physical, mental and emotional — should be embedded in company policies, processes, performance management and reward programmes. We need to realise the potential benefits of more balanced mental well-being among staff are far-reaching. In short, build a culture around caring for employees and everyone wins.

GEN Z ARE FEARLESS, AMBITIOUS, RESTLESS, PROUD AND VALUES DRIVEN. THEY PERFORM BEST WHEN THEIR BELIEFS ARE ALIGNED WITH COMPANY VALUES. THEY EXPECT AUTONOMY, TRANSPARENCY AND A SOUND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The entertainment shift towards videogaming



STEFANO VIRGILLI
stefano@virgilli.com

The writer is a member of the International Press Association

A few years ago, I wrote on these pages a column about the gaming industry, which at that time it was just starting to get noticed by big corporations.

In the article I mentioned that the projection was for the whole of gaming to be worth in entertainment capital more than the whole of Hollywood.

I must admit that at that time I did not believe it. Indeed, I sensed that there was a growing interest in video games, but I frankly imagined that it was about to plateau. Moreover, I grew up with the big blockbusters and the Oscar ceremony awards, so Hollywood was — in my small view — untouchable.

I was very wrong in my prediction. And the latest Oscar night just proved how the entertainment industry has changed before, during, and after the pandemic. From an exclusive elite, to an inclusive endless playable saga.

Video games are no longer just something to be measured in units of matches with limited duration, but rather immersive experiences that can hook audience in for countless hours. Similarly, to a Netflix or HBO series, video



A man plays a computer game at an Internet cafe in Beijing, China. — Reuters

games are divided into chapters that can be played — ever slightly differently — over and over again.

Recently I became fond of a video game called Red Dead Redemption 2, and while searching tutorials online, I came across a content creator who claimed he spent more than 500 hours on the game.

This was unthinkable just a few

years ago, when games were just a spare time recreational activities and the term e-sport did not exist.

Given the massive traction in the industry, corporate giants have been stocking up game studios under their direct control, in order to gain access to as much good content as possible.

Recently Zynga — which started with the Facebook video game

Farm Ville — was acquired by Take-Two.

Then Microsoft brought forward a massive \$69 billion mega-deal to purchase Activision Blizzard King, and lastly Sony bought Bungie, the developer of the popular multiplayer online game Destiny 2. The year 2022 is already going to be remembered as the year when major players expanded their

portfolios and ramped up their in-house studio expertise, by either acquiring the studios entirely as a direct subsidiary, or through the purchase of the majority of the shares.

Microsoft is leading the ranking of first-party owned game development studios, with 23 of them as of now, and 9 more on the way through the recent Activision Blizzard King acquisition, as long as antitrust scrutiny by the FTC goes smoothly.

A bulk of studios came from ZeniMax Media, which Microsoft bought in 2020 for \$8.7 billion (inflation-adjusted). ZeniMax Media encompasses 8 studios, including Bethesda Game Studios, known for the franchise Elder Scrolls.

Next in rank are Sony and Electronic Arts (EA) with 21 studios each under their belts. Followed by Tencent, that acquired fully or as a majority shareholder 14 studios since its inception, mostly focusing on online games. Especially through the acquisitions of Turtle Rock Studios, the developers of the multiplayer shooter franchise Left 4 Dead, Back 4 Blood, as well as Riot Games, the studio behind League of Legends, one of the world's biggest eSports titles. *(To be continued)*

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
Choose from a wide range of brands & models
PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

Tally
POWER OF SIMPLICITY

TALLY FOR VAT

For Tally Sales, Services or Customization

Contact: Guruprasad +968 79248644, 98753781
Email: guru.prasad@asiasolutions.net
ASIA SOLUTIONS

<https://www.asiasolutions.net>

TallyPrime

SUNDAY	APRIL 10, 2022	RAMADHAN 8, 1443 AH		
Observer Classified Section	Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230 m.alrahd186@yahoo.com	Ali al Maashari: 99639264 ali.almashari@omandaily.om	Saada al Rashdi 95919344	94501166 24649593 24649595

SIT. WANTED

FINANCE graduate, working in one of the finance company's in Oman with more than 15 years of experience is looking for a job. Contact: 99841436

CIVIL Engineer, B Tech, Male Graduate experienced in the field of construction & site management providing technical expertise & leadership qualities in Construction & Maintenance Projects. Immediate joining & available for interview on any working day. Please contact Aqeel Uz Zama, Email: aqeeljob0129@gmail.com Phone +968 78187050.

INDIAN male graduate Executive Secretary/ Stenography/ Oman DL and Muscat experience available. Contact 79256679.

PREVIOUS Oman experience in Outdoor Sales & Operations looking for suitable job opportunity. Oman Driving Licence. Expected Salary 850/. 00918281058000 igin.tom@gmail.com

21 YEARS of experience in Oman as an Accountant in different industries with 14 years of continuous service in a real estate company. Oman D/L and NOC available. Contact 92583726. Email: georgetvm@live.com

LOST

REHAM Faisal Hafez HassanHegazy has lost Egyptian Passport No A15701831. Finder please handover to ROP.

SERVICES

A LEGAL translation office needs **Marketeers**. Contact E-mail: oman4n@gmail.com

AUTOCAD/ REVIT ARCH MEP, part/full-time. Contact WhatsApp: 79037728.

AL SUMRI AC maintenance. We are ready to repair and install all types of Air-Conditioner within Muscat Governorate. 94301888.

RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car AMAZING OFFERS
○ Rent a car for 10 days and get an extra free day.
○ Rent for one month and get 5 days free.
All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts.
☎972494490.

LUXURIOUS Toyota bus 2016, air-conditioned, 30 passengers, offered for daily/ monthly/annually, Muscat. Contact: 98080609, 96316269.

FOR RENT

FLATS, 2BHK and 1 BHK in Mumtaz ☎99341138/ 90991079.

FLATS, 2BHK in Ghubra near Indian School. ☎99341138/ 90991079.

SITUATION VACANT SALES SECRETARY

Graduate with minimum 4 years of similar working experience, preferably at an executive level, aged around 30 years, thoroughly conversant with excel, word, power point and other packages, hardworking and having pleasant disposition, required by renowned Trading Company. Oman experience preferred.

Apply asap / within 5 days to : venkat@biglcoman.com / vimal@biglcoman.com

AL NAMANI CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR AIR AND SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR CARGO
INDIA • BANGLADESH
NEPAL • SRI LANKA • INDONESIA
PHILIPPINES • AFRICA • EUROPE
USA • ALL GCC

TOLL FREE NUMBER
80066766
www.alnamanicargo.com

FREE PICK UP 24/7

Branches: Ruwi, Hamriya, Chala, Sohar, Barka, Suwayh, Sohar

M M T CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE

MUSCAT: 95605353, 95605454
BARKA: 95893242, 93743308
SOHAR: 96773031, 95347988
FALAJ: 94002341, 95136067
SALALAH: 94575905, 97858656
DUQUIM: 97218831, 94002341

ROAD, SEA & AIR TRANSPORT WORLD WIDE

GTC Building, Near Badr Al Sama Hospital, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman
E-mail: mmtcargo@yahoo.com
Customer Care: 96773031 / 97695454

Sea Cargo 800 Bz/Kg Express Cargo to Kerala 5 to 7 days*

AL KHOORY EQUIPMENT EST.
P.O.Box 545, P.C. 117, Al Wadi Al Kabir Area, Sultanate of Oman

Official distributor of **Schneider Electric**

Stockist & Wholesaler of Low Voltage Switchgear Products and a One Stop Solution for all Switchgear Products and Assembly

Schneider Electric, Lovato, DAB, WEG, Franklin Electric, Alfanar

Tel: +968 24832474, +968 79474556
E-mail: alkhoory@omantel.net.om • www.alkhooryoman.com

Quality Comes First

Tower Cranes & Passenger Lifts:
• Sales and Rental Services
• Installation
• Maintenance Service
• Breakdown Service
• Spare Parts Supply
• Hoist & Lowering
• Support Fixation
• Dismantling
Steel Fabrication Works

NEW MANARA TECHNICAL SERVICES LLC
Mobile: +968 9853 1975, 9853 1970
E-mail: info@newmanara.com / newmanaratechnical@gmail.com
Website: www.newmanara.com

SITUATION VACANT
Required for Ras Al Hamra Recreation Centre (PDO Club)
SWIMMING POOL LIFEGUARDS/ATTENDANTS (Male & Female) OMANIS ONLY

Qualification & Skills: Accomplished swimmer with recognized Life Saving and First Aid qualifications and certifications. Must be fluent in written & spoken English.

Experience: 2 years working as Life Guard & Pool Attendant.

Job Responsibilities: Supervise swimming activities, children and other weak swimmers and ensure pool and safety guidelines are followed. Must be willing to work shift duties and on weekends.

Note: A swimming test will be conducted to test the candidates swimming and rescue skills
Please email CV to: oceanint@omantel.net.om

SITUATION VACANT - OMAN
A well reputed diversified group in Oman is seeking the following positions for their Interior Fit-out division:

SALES MANAGER
5+ years experience in sales/ business development role in interior fitout & office furniture industry with a proven track record for growing sales.

SALES EXECUTIVE
3+ years experience in project sales of commercial furniture/ interior fitout.

INTERIOR DESIGNER
2+ years experience in designing commercial interiors. Well versed in Autocad, Photoshop & 3 D Max.

ASSISTANT PROJECT MANAGER
3+ years experience in Interior fit-out project execution and preferably with Civil Engineering background. The candidate must be familiar with joinery operations and estimation.

ESTIMATOR
5+ years experience in joinery, woodworks, and interior fit-out. Graduate/ Diploma in Engineering

All applicants must be well-versed in English, proficient in MS office and have good presentation skills. Applicants are requested to send their CVs with color photograph attached to: recruitments007@gmail.com

JOB SEEKING
General Manager. 16 Years Oman Experienced. Projects Executed in ROP, MODES, Government and Private Sectors.
Contact No. : 91123511

VIGAS CARGO
WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR

Transportation, Packing & Cargo Services

♦ CARGO SERVICES BY AIR & SEA WORLD WIDE
♦ DOOR TO DOOR DELIVERY IN INDIA, INDONESIA & UK
♦ PROFESSIONAL PACKERS & MOVERS
♦ MUSCAT - DUBAI - MUSCAT REGULAR TRANSPORT

H.O. Ruwi
99851366
92495068

Ghubrah : 93571703
Falaj : 93571704
Store : 93571823
Misfa : 98119561
93260956

vigas.cargo@yahoo.com

Observer

For Advertisements
Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office
Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahd186@yahoo.com

Salalah Office
Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omanidaily@gmail.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadi.almashari@yahoo.com

Nizwa Office
Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suham Office
Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com

www.omanobserver.com

#Living_with_COVID19

DR. NORA BARAKAT MD, MS
DERMATOLOGY AND AESTHETICS
MEDICINE SPECIALIST

CONSULTATION AVAILABLE
SAT TO WED 10AM TO 6PM
THU 8AM TO 2PM

CONTACT US
+968 24451726 - +968 79235354

AL MASALAH (DEAN TRAFFIC SIGNAL) - SULTANATE OF OMAN
P.O. BOX 144444, MUSCAT

EMERGENCY NO
+968 94602100

With summer finally here, consider an escape to Wadi Al Hoqain

One of the most visited wadis as of late is Wadi Al Hoqain in the Wilayat of Rustaq located about two hours drive away from the capital Muscat. With its year-round flowing waterfalls and crystal clear waters, a visit to this place would justify why it's becoming a beloved destination for many adventure seekers...**P20**

Understanding the true meaning of leadership

By Mohammed bin Anwar al Balushi

IN SPITE OF numerous attempts to convince myself to understand the definitions of leadership given by writers, authors, and speakers, I wasn't able to grasp them. It seems as though something is missing from people's definition of leadership. Is leadership a role someone can assume for a specified period of time?

Leadership is not at all about seniority or one's position in the hierarchy as what we see in today's modern institutions. Leadership is beyond that.

Bruce J Avolio in his book, full leadership development said, "To lead means to step back before moving forward". Are Bruce's remarks implying that the past must be analysed and what went wrong must be corrected and the future better? It is a good idea, by the way, and many leaders might follow suit.

One of the authors, namely, Lauri J Mullin has defined leadership by saying, "There are many ways of looking at leadership and many interpretations of its meaning". In other words, leadership does not mean that it is a one-line path to go, but that it has numerous other perspectives from

which to look at it from different perspectives.

Where does the word leader come from? Joseph C Rost, says that; "The word leader first appeared in the English language in the year the 1300s: it stems from the root of "leden" meaning to travel or show the way". I can argue in this way by saying that if I have travelled a lot and shown people different ways, will I become a leader?

I agree with Bass who said that; "Different definitions serve different purposes. Today the definitions of leadership have become so pervasive that its true meaning is difficult to ascertain". The true meaning and goal of leadership still remain obscure to me. It is because of the role play and the person creating the role.

Three years ago, I read the book of Ken Blanchard on leadership, where he stated that; "They must have visions, a vision must have built trust, collaboration, independence, motivation, and mutual responsibility for success. Vision helps people make smart choices because their decisions are being made with the end result in mind". This definition seems



like a wish, but leadership isn't about wishes.

I liked the way Kevin Kruse criticised the definition of Peter Drucker on leadership. "The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers", says, Peter Drucker.

Kevin Kruse replied that; "A new

Army Captain is put in the command of 200 soldiers. He never leaves his room or utters a word to the men and women in his unit. Perhaps routine orders are given through a subordinate. By default, his troops have to "follow" orders. Is the Captain really a leader?

QURAN VERSE OF THE DAY

Say, "I take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak. From the evil of what He created. And from the evil of the darkness as it gathers. And from the evil of those who practice sorcery. And from the evil of an envious when he envies.

(al Falaq)



**HIS EMINENCE
SHAIKH AHMED
BIN HAMAD AL KHALILI
GRAND MUFTI OF OMAN**

FATWA

QUESTION:

I spent around 13 years in Europe. During that period, I wasn't fasting in Ramadhan. Should I compensate by fasting or feeding people in need, instead?

ANSWER:

If you are able to fast, you must fast, at least one month in a year. Feeding poor people is only for those who are medically unable to fast.

HADITH A GUIDE FOR THE FAITHFUL

Abu Huraira and Abu Sa'id (Allah be pleased with both of them) reported Allah's Messenger (as saying):

Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, said: Fast (is exclusively) meant for Me and I would give its reward. There are two (occasions) of joy for the observer of fast. He feels joy when he breaks the fast and he is happy when he meets Allah. By Allah in Whose Hand is the life of Muhammad, the breath of the observer of fast is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk.

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



yru_here

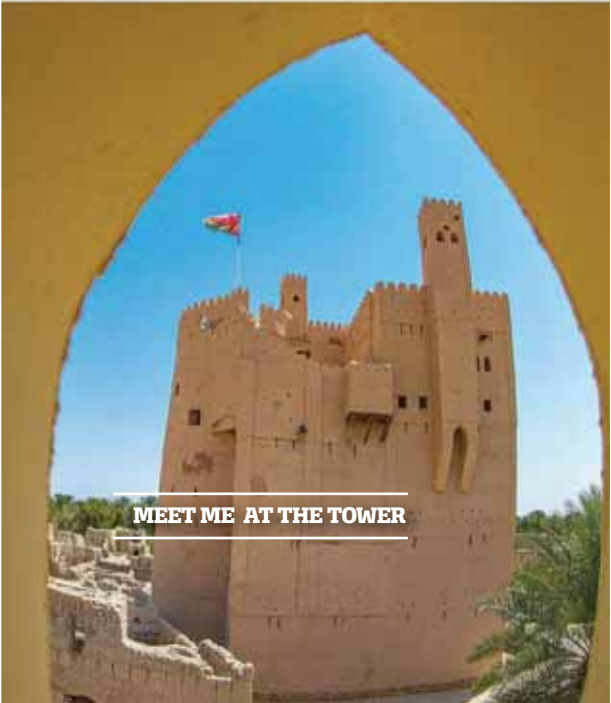


A CELEBRATION



khalidalmawali_ولاية منح

Follow



MEET ME AT THE TOWER



goingthewholehoggOman

Follow



ROAD TRIP

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

0

We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use **#OmanObserver** and **#BeAnObserver**.

AROUND THE WORLD

ART

Royal gifts from Japan to Britain go on display in London exhibition



FROM SAMURAI armour to a folding screen depicting Mount Fuji, dozens of Japanese artifacts from the British royal collection go on public display in a new exhibition at the Queen's Gallery near Buckingham Palace. "Japan: Courts and Culture", which opens on Friday, features more than 150 items, including gifts from Japanese emperors to



Queens Victoria and Elizabeth. "Japan: Courts and Culture" tells the story of 350 years of artistic and diplomatic exchange between the courts of Britain and Japan," exhibition curator Rachel Peat told Reuters at a media preview on Thursday. "Many of (the items) were official diplomatic gifts presented by members of the imperial family...So they have this real courtly provenance and history." Items on show include swords, lacquer cabinets, paintings and intricate ornaments. Also features is a gift from Emperor Hirohito for Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953. Elizabeth, who marks her Platinum Jubilee this year, received a box decorated with a silver heron in what is described as the first diplomatic gift between the two nations after World War II. The exhibition runs until February 2023. — Reuters

CULTURE

Sound of Mughal-era sarangi instrument fading away in Pakistan



IN THE SHADOW of Lahore's centuries-old Badshahi Mosque, Zohaib Hassan plucks at the strings of a sarangi, filling the streets with a melodious hum and cry. Remarkable for its resemblance to the human voice, the classical instrument is fading from Pakistan's music scene — except for a few players dedicated to preserving its place. Difficult to master, expensive to repair, and with little financial reward for professionals, the sarangi's decline has been difficult to halt, Hassan told AFP. "We are trying to keep the instrument alive, not even taking into account our miserable financial condition," he said. For seven generations, his family has mastered the bowed, short-necked instrument and Hassan is well-respected across Pakistan for his abilities, regularly appearing on television, radio and at private parties. "My family's craze for the instrument forced me to pursue a career as a sarangi player, leaving my education incomplete," he said. "I live hand-to-mouth as the majority of directors arrange musical programmes with the latest orchestras and pop bands." Traditional instruments are competing with a booming R&B and pop scene in a country where more than 60 per cent of the population is aged under 30. Sara Zaman, a classical music teacher at the National Council of Arts in Lahore, said alongside the sarangi, other traditional instruments such as the sitar, santoor, and tanpura are also dying out. "Platforms have been given to other disciplines like pop music,

but it has been missing in the case of classical music," she said. "The sarangi, being a very difficult instrument, has not been given due importance and attention in Pakistan leading to its gradual demise." "THE STRINGS OF MY HEART" The sarangi gained prominence in Indian classical music in the 17th century, during the reign of the Mughals in the subcontinent. Its decline began in the 1980s after the death of several master players and classical singers in the country, said Khwaja Najam-ul-Hassan, a television director who has created an archive of Pakistan's leading musicians. "The instrument was close to the hearts of the top internationally acclaimed male and female classical singers, but it began to fade away after they died," he said. Ustad Allah Rakha, one of Pakistan's most globally acclaimed sarangi players, died in 2015 after a career that saw him perform with orchestras around the world. Now players say they struggle to survive on performance fees alone, often much smaller than those paid to modern guitarists, pianists or violinists. Carved by hand from a single block of cedar native to parts of Pakistan, the sarangi's primary strings are made of goat gut while the seventeen sympathetic strings — a common feature on subcontinent folk instruments — are steel. The instrument costs around 120,000 rupees (\$625) and most of its parts are imported from neighbouring India, where it

remains a principal part of the canon. "The price has gone up as there is a ban on imports from India," said Muhammad Tahir, the owner of one of only two repair shops in Lahore. Pakistan downgraded diplomatic ties and stopped bilateral trade with India over New Delhi's decision in 2019 to strip the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region of its semi-autonomous status. Tahir, who spends around two months carefully restoring a single worn-out sarangi, said no one in Pakistan manufactures the special steel strings because of the lack of demand. "There is no admiration for sarangi players and the few people who are repairing this wonderful instrument," said Ustad Zia-ud-Din, the owner of the other Lahore repair shop, which has existed in some form for 200 years. Efforts to adapt to the modern music scene have shown pockets of promise. "We have invented new ways of playing, including making the sarangi semi-electric to enhance the sound during performances with modern musical instruments," said Hassan of the academy he runs in Lahore. He has now performed several times with the adapted instrument, and says the reception has been positive. One of the few students is 14-year-old musician Mohsin Muddasir, who has shunned instruments such as the guitar to take on the sarangi. "I am learning this instrument because it plays with the strings of my heart," he said. — AFP

TRAVEL TALES

St Mark's storied palazzo opens doors to Venetians for first time



FOR CENTURIES the impressive arcades flanking St Mark's Square in Venice have embodied the watery city's elegance, harmony and architectural significance. Now, the Renaissance-era palazzo whose galleries span as far as the eye can see on the north side of the square is opening to the public for the first time on Friday, following a three-year renovation. The building known as the Procuratie Vecchie, now owned by Italian insurer Generali, was long the seat of the Procurators of St Mark, who for centuries administered the assets of the church in the wealthy city of Venice, away from the public eye. The exclusive invitation for locals to finally glimpse the interior of the storied palace following Friday's inauguration has already attracted reservations from more than 3,000 Venetians. Doors will be open to tourists from around the world from April 13. Built in the 12th century, the Procuratie Vecchie was devastated by fire in 1512, its Venetian-Byzantine building replaced in 1538 by the Renaissance gem in classical style, whose arches — along with the square's basilica, belltower — are one of the St Mark's most recognised features. FAMOUS FACADE Generali commissioned renowned English architect David Chipperfield to breathe new life into the building. Although St Mark's Square is one of the world's most famous, "none of us has really imagined what is behind these facades," Chipperfield told AFP, adding it was rare for such a big square to enjoy "such a coherent facade". "Superficially it all looks as if it has been built in one time but it has been built by a number of architects over 100 years," he said, adding that his role was to correct many of the "haphazard changes" made over the years. Besides restoring the first and second floors and improving accessibility on higher floors, the work has included building a new home for The Human Safety Net, a foundation

launched by Generali to help the world's most vulnerable, including refugees. The renovation includes the addition of exhibition rooms, an auditorium and a cafe. The foundation's director, Emma Ursich, said the Procuratie Vecchie was a fitting spot for the group, given that the Venetian officials who lived and worked there were also responsible for widows, orphans and the destitute. "So for us it's a nice homage to the history and to the identity of this building that we have the home of The Human Safety Net here, which works around social inclusion topics," Ursich said. VENICE'S WINGED LION To the left of the main entrance, the winged lion of Saint Mark, symbol of the city but also the emblem of Generali, is inlaid in the white marble wall. A plaque commemorates the birth in 1831 of the insurer in Trieste, which moved part of its operations to Venice the following year. "We had a building that had been compromised over a very long period of time. It had been modified, added on, changed," said Chipperfield. "So our responsibility was to bring the building back into some type of integrity." The recovery project took three years following a two-year design phase aimed at preserving as much of the existing structure as possible. Chipperfield lauded Italy's skilled craftsmen who "have been restoring buildings for a thousand years". They relied on techniques and materials that are part of Venice's tradition, such as a finishing plaster with a satin effect known as "marmorino", and "terrazzo", a mix of coloured marble fragments and cement for floors and walls. Just across the square is the 17th-century Procuratie Nuove building. The home of illustrious members of the Habsburg dynasty in the mid-1800s, the structure overlooks the secretive Royal Gardens along the Grand Canal. The gardens were reopened to the public in 2019 after five years of restoration. — AFP



With summer finally here, consider an escape to Wadi Al Hoqain

By Arwa Al Hashimi
Photos by Muaath Al Nadabi

Oman's wadis are some of the best in the Middle East. Adventure lovers in Oman continue to be attracted by these wadis because they offer different levels of entertainment and without a doubt, these natural waterparks are bringing more joy as they offer relaxation and allow visitors to be closer to nature.

One of the most visited wadis as of late is Wadi Al Hoqain in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq located about two hours drive away from the capital Muscat. With its year-round flowing waterfalls and crystal clear waters, a visit to this place would justify why it's becoming a beloved destination for many adventure seekers.

Wadi Al Hoqain is an extension of Wadi Bani Ghafer. During rainy seasons, it is a force of nature you don't want to be caught in as the flooding usually is so strong the water will take away whatever is on its way.

But in summer and calm season, it is one of the most scenic destinations with beautiful cliffs and stone structures and allows access to beautiful gardens right at the end of the wadi. For many visitors, Al Khandaq, a portion of the wadi where beautiful rock formations can be found is the best place where tourists come to stay.

Many portions of the wadi are lush green because of the collection of date palms and gardens. Other than the beautiful terrain where the water flows, some portions are also beloved by guests because of the sulphuric sediments collected on rocks and the bottom of the pools. This enhances the overall aesthetic of some swimming holes. There are also therapeutic hot springs that people visit either for pleasure or relaxation and locals believe that dipping into these pools can cure some skin diseases.

Camping enthusiasts love Al Hoqain because of the many different options one can camp with easy access to the water. In summer times, dozens of campers can be found in nearly all of the best spots enjoying the chance to have a nice long bath and get refreshed by the sulfur water.

For those who haven't visited Wadi Al Hoqain yet, there are several distinct attractions you have to see. Near one of the villages is a man-made dam where the water overflows and creates a mesmerising waterfall that allows you to take beautiful Instagram-worthy photos.

The water from the wadi also flows to different aflaj that irrigates the farms in places like Al Janaiba, Al Hafi, Ain Aali and Al Shuaiba — all homes of farmers that rely on agricultural crops and fruit trees for day to day living. Other than the date palm trees, lemons, mangoes and various other seasonal crops also grow



in the gardens here.

For those who enjoy caving, the cliffs of the wadi also offer many different caves for you to explore. Scattered in the long stretch of cliffs are the caves of Khubat Al Zarqa, Al Saradib, Al Sarifiniyah, Jewar Thuraya, Al Murasrasah, Janat Al Fard, Al Ma'idin and Jewar Helis. The caves are usually shallow and cannot be compared to other cave systems in Oman but they are worth checking out from some amazing features inside and outside the caves.

Beyond the wadi, there are many astonishing ancient buildings that can be explored to learn more about the history of the area. One of these is Al Hoqain Fort built around a hundred years ago on a hill surrounded by lush gardens. The fort has several towers that were used for military purposes

and observation. A few metres from this tower is the beautiful Al Hazm Castle built originally for defence but also includes some of the most beautiful architectural wonders one can find in an old building. Renovated recently, the castle is now equipped with digital guides and descriptions to make your tour a great experience.

If you're looking for a destination to check out next, consider Wadi Al Hoqain in your plans. Just a heads up, to access some of the best places, you may have to leave your car and hike several metres.

