

P12

BAHLA END SEEB WINNING STREAK



P13

TRIAL LAUNCH OF RO 50M SHINAS JETTY PROJECT IN Q4



P20

5 ATTRACTIONS IN BAHLA FOR THAT PERFECT EID GETAWAY



MUSCAT

FDI FLOW GREW BY 7.7 PER CENT

The volume of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in the Sultanate of Oman grew by 7.7 per cent to reach RO 17.08 billion by the end of the fourth quarter of 2021 compared to RO 15.86 billion during the same period in 2020, according to the statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Inflows of FDIs by the end of the fourth quarter of 2021 reached RO 1.22 billion. The United Kingdom (UK) came at the forefront of FDI in Oman at the end of the fourth quarter of 2021. **DETAILS ON P13**

CRUDE PRICE AT \$102.55 A BARREL

Oman oil price for June delivery on Wednesday reached \$102.55, comprising a rise by \$3.32 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$99.23. The average price of Oman oil for April delivery has stabilised at \$91.96, thus \$8.34 per barrel higher than March delivery. World oil prices — under pressure recently owing to worries about weaker Chinese demand — fell again back towards \$100 per barrel. Brent crude was up 0.2 per cent at \$105.20 per barrel.



26

Ramadhan

1443 AH

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	dhuhr	asr
04:16 AM	12:09 PM	03:36 PM
maghrib	isha	
06:38 PM	07:53 PM	

INSIDE



COURT JAILS SUU KYI FOR FIVE YEARS FOR CORRUPTION

P6



DECARBONISATION IS NOW A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

P9

HIS MAJESTY ISSUES ROYAL DECREE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Wednesday issued a Royal Decree No 23/2022 on amending some provisions of the Administrative Court Law.

Article (1) says that the amendments attached to this Decree shall be applied to the aforementioned Administrative Court Law.

Article (2) cancels all that contradicts this Decree — or the amendments attached herewith — or contravenes their provisions.

Article (3) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publication.

— ONA

PREPARATIONS FOR DUQM ECONOMIC FORUM



The Main Committee of the First Duqm Economic Forum on Wednesday held its first meeting under the chairmanship of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said. The meeting reviewed the preparations of holding the First Duqm Economic Forum which will highlight investment opportunities and potentials enjoyed by Duqm zone and its economic importance. The committee comprises the Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), the Inspector General for Police and Customs, the Minister of Information and the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. – ONA

End Israel’s occupation of Palestinian lands

OMAN ASKS GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO TAKE MORE ACTIVE ROLE

NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman has urged the global community to take a more active role to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands in accordance with international legitimacy decisions, notably Security Council Decisions No 224 and 338.

This was stated by Dr Mohammed bin Awadh al Hassan, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations (UN), who delivered a speech before the UN Security Council about the developments in the Palestinian issue.

Oman also welcomed the ‘statement’ called for by the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process



Dr Mohammed Awadh al Hassan

(UNSCO), hoping that the parties concerned would respond to the mission entrusted to them and exhibit the level of cooperation needed to restore security and stability in all occupied Palestinian lands, particularly in the holy shrine of Al Quds (Jerusalem).

Oman pointed out that reports, including those issued by international organisations, affirm that conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories are “not normal and set to escalate due to recurring, unjustifiable Israeli aggression and violation of

Palestinian people’s rights, which is in blatant breach of rules of the International Law and relevant decisions of the Security Council and the UN at large.

In particular, Oman denounced Israel’s provocative and illegal practices in the occupied Palestinian lands and its forces’ storming Al Aqsa Mosque and the holy shrine of Al Quds, angering the unarmed worshippers - which is in stark violation of the International Law, as well as human values and rights.

TURN TO P5

UN chief Guterres in Ukraine for talks

KYIV: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced his arrival in Kyiv on Wednesday following talks in Moscow with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“I have arrived in Ukraine after visiting Moscow,” he wrote on his official Twitter account as he landed ahead of talks with Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky.

“We will continue our work to expand humanitarian support and secure the evacuation of civilians from conflict zones. The sooner this war ends, the better — for the sake of Ukraine, Russia, and the world,” Guterres tweeted.

At the Moscow talks on Tuesday, Guterres repeated calls for both Russia and Ukraine to work together to set up “safe and effective” humanitarian corridors in war-torn Ukraine.

In turn, Putin told him he hoped that negotiations could end the conflict which saw Russian troops waging war on Ukraine on February 24.

“Despite the fact that the military operation is ongoing, we still hope that we will be able to reach agreements on the



diplomatic track,” the Russian leader said in televised remarks.

Talks had been taking place in Turkey but stalled after the discovery of civilian bodies in areas near Kyiv previously occupied by Russian forces.

Meanwhile, the United Nations’ tourism body on Wednesday suspended Russia from the agency over its war on Ukraine, arguing that it had breached its statutes.

Most of the 159 member states of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) backed the move, taken at an extraordinary general assembly, said a spokesman for the Madrid-based body.

The motion was proposed by 22 member states including Spain, Japan, Poland and France in March.

— Agencies

Believers throng mosques for ‘Laylat-ul-Qadr’

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Believers throng the mosques during the last phase of the holy month seeking the ‘Laylat-ul-Qadr’ which is described as the ‘the promised night’ in the holy Quran.

Also known as the ‘night of power’ or ‘the night of greatest rewards’ is the night the holy Quran was sent down to mankind,

during one of the odd nights of the last 10 days of Ramadhan.

During these nights, believers keep themselves busy engaging in prayers, supplications, and other deeds such as zakat and sadaqa (two forms of supporting the fellow beings) and the like as the holy month enters the most important and the last phase and is about to leave.

This is the first time that i’tikaf (staying over in prayers) is allowed

There is a night in the odd nights of the holy month which is more powerful than 1,000 nights

and believers gather at mosques seeking Almighty’s blessings.

‘Qiyamul Lail’ is a prayer each one prays either individually or

as a group which includes long, standing supplications which is a part of the last 10 days of the holy month.

According to the holy Quran, Allah Almighty has said in the book that there is a night in the odd nights of the holy month which is more powerful than 1,000 nights and it is the night when the holy Quran, the guiding book for the entire mankind, is sent down to the people.

As far as the believers are concerned, these special days and nights and their due celebrations will be followed by the preparations for Eid al Fitr after nearly 30 days of fasting.

Believers continue to engage themselves all the more in such supplications, special prayers and mandatory fasting till the moon is sighted for the beginning of the month ‘Shawwal’ heralding the arrival of Eid al Fitr the next day.



5 DAYS DEAL

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Aziza Daily Meal Basmati Rice 5 kgs



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Pepsi / Mirinda / Mountain Dew / 7up Can 10 x 100 ml Assorted



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Oasis Drinking Water 24 x 500 ml



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Combo Meal Pack (Vegetable Fried Rice 500 gms + Sweet 'N' Sour Chicken 150 gms)



Rial 0.190

Onion Loose (India) per kg



Rial 0.790

Pineapple per pc



Rial 0.675

Blueberry (UAE) 125 gms



Rial 0.290

Rock Melon (Oman) per kg



Rial 0.940

Dragon Fruit (Vietnam) per kg



Rial 1.290

Mango Badami per kg



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6 Pcs

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4 Pcs

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Signal Toothpaste 4 x 100 ml



2 Pcs

SAVE 54.023%
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Rial 1.000

Dabur Vatika Shampoo 2 x 400 ml Assorted



2 Pcs

SAVE 21.849%
Rial 3.570-
Rial 2.790

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3 Pcs

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Fairy Dishwash Liquid Rose / Lemon Blossom 3 x 750 ml Assorted



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RIAL 69,900

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‘GREAT FEELING’
of fasting



VINITHA SARASWATHI

Tender Notice

The Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Musandam Governorate) invites the following Tender:

Tender No.	Description	Eligibility	Last Date of Sale Tender Documents	Date of Submission	Tender Fee (RO)
02/2022	Providing Cleaning and Hospitality Services for OWWSC (Water Sector Facilities) Premises Musandam Governorate for 18 months.	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned.	12/05/2022	19/05/2022	25 Rials (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable

- The tender documents can be obtained from Financial Control Section Support Services Department Musandam Governorate from the date of publication of this announcement (from 8.00 am to 12.00 pm, Sunday to Thursday) up to the last date of distribution of tender documents stated above.
- Tenders should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the Chairman of the Sub Tender Committee Musandam Governorate and marked with Tender Number and the subject. No other marks or any reference thereto should be printed outside the envelopes.
- All participating companies shall submit a Bid Bond of 1% of bid value along with their offer. Bid Bond must be obtained from a Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman and it should be addressed in favour of The Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- Sealed bid along with all required documents shall be delivered to the Tender Box, in the Support Service Building in Musandam Governorate, located at Wilayat of Khasab not later than 10:00 am on the date specified above.
- Preference shall be given to the Companies which comprise the required percentage of Omanization and possible purchase of Omani National Products.
- Tenderer should provide Tender Board registration certificate & Visa Card for Payment
- For more information, please contact: 26830810 - 26830843

@owwsc_om
www.owwsc.nama.om

SOHAR Port and Freezone invites Tenderers to the following tenders:

No	Tender Ref	Tender Title	Tender Fee RO
1	SIPC 2022-044	Working Environment Project (Consultancy Services for Office Re-Design)	26.250
2	SFZ 2022-002	Safety Guardrails Supply & Installation in SOHAR Freezone	26.250

- The above-mentioned tender fees including the VAT 5%.
- Tenderers can request to receive the electronic tender documents from 9:00 am on Wednesday, 27/04/2022 until 4:00 pm on Thursday 13/05/2022.
- Tenderers to follow the below procedures and steps to obtain the electronic tender documents:

Step 1: Interested Tenderers should remit the stated tender fees as per the below bank details:

Account Name	Sohar Industrial Port Co
Account Number	3101-007970-500
Bank Name	Oman Arab bank SAOC – Main Br
SWIT	OMABOMRUXXX

Note: Bank transfers is the only mode of payment accepted

Step 2: Tenderers to send the following documents:

- A request for the electronic tender documents
- Scanned bank transfer
- The firm's commercial registration documents
- All shall be communicated to the following e-mail address: sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

Step 3: Tenderers will receive the electronic tender documents.

- SOHAR reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reasons.
- All SMES are requested to provide their Green Card along with the required documents.
- For any clarification regarding the tenders please send an e-mail to: sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

It all starts here
+968 2685 2700 | sipc@soharportandfreezone.com

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

People have different reasons to fast. Some fast for spiritual reasons, some for health benefits, while there are some others who fast just for the feel of it and in solidarity with their fasting friends and colleagues.

For those who have embraced Islam, the first experience of Ramadhan with prayers, Suhoor, Iftar and charity are something which they cherish till their last breath.

Some of those who embraced Islam and some non-Muslims who fast during Ramadhan have shared their experience with the Observer.

Sister Hanan, aka Nur al Khamar, an Italian, responded to her inner calling. In search of truth, she became a Muslim after she studied the holy Quran and followed the lifestyle of Prophet Mohammed (May Peace be Upon Him).

“There are some things and experiences that we fail to express in words. My first Ramadhan gave me a great feeling that I belonged to a large community that cares for each other and beyond,” quipped Hanan.

“The moment my first Ramadhan began, I felt cleaner every passing day, I felt the connection with Allah, I could speak to Him freely about anything bothering me and also about my new happiness because of Him in my new life. My sense of loneliness eased, because I knew I had sisters and brothers I could count on and vice versa,” Hanan added.

Sudha Reghunath, a banker who has been living in the country for nearly three decades, began to fast 24 years ago when she was working with Bank Muscat.

“All my colleagues were in their fasting, and I used to have my food as usual. But during mid-Ramadhan, I felt what I was doing was not good. Why can't I fast during office hours, at least in front of my colleagues?,” this thought really bothered me.

Soon she followed fasting in the proper manner. Woke up at 4.30 am and had Suhoor and began to fast till evening 6.45.

“I felt fresh, although I was a bit tired the first week and soon I got used to the ritual. My colleagues encouraged me like anything.”

She completed the whole month and continued her one-month fasting all these years.

“For me, fasting earned a lot of love and respect from different corners. Whenever people know that I am fasting, they treat me with much love and respect. I am so happy



PRASAD KANNAMALI

While fasting, I feel comfortable with the surroundings and feel it as a good practice to have better health physically and mentally



SUDHA REGHUNATH

that I can do this much during this Ramadhan time.”

Vinitha Saraswathi, who visited Oman to join her family, is also fasting. She feels peace and happiness after fasting.

“A simple, common yet the biggest issue that our society faces today is finding inner peace and happiness. It is all about doing what your heart says, chasing your dreams and seeking happiness within you. I feel Ramadhan fasting is all about finding inner peace,” says Vinitha.

According to her, there are some steps which one can follow to keep peace of mind. The first step is to eliminate the wrong belief system of negativities that you have kept in mind for a long time. Once you try this step, you can gradually see all those negativities fading away from your life.

“Here comes the necessity of the Islamic way of meditation. Construct a belief system that I am the hero of my life and I'm a beautiful soul. I'm kind and true to myself.”

Perlita P Aplca and El Malyn, the two expatriates from the Philippines, came to Oman some years ago. They were fascinated by the lifestyle of their Omani bosses and wanted to know how they treated their fellow beings.

They were taken around, and it was something new for them how their bosses were supplying food and other provisions to the needy, which, according to them, was ‘something new’.

“This is our first Ramadhan, and we fasted as much as possible and, thanks to God Almighty, we are successful in achieving the results. We are undergoing spiritual refinement and physical and intellectual refurbishment as well,” the two young women shared their experience at the Ta'aruf introduction programme by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs.

Prasad Kannamali, Jr Supervisor at BEC MEP division, had never expected to fast for a whole day in his wildest thoughts.

He felt kind of ‘ashamed’, in his own words, to be eating stomach-full while his colleagues were fasting.

With a great sense of guilt, he began to fast with them in 2021 and was able to give not a shock but double shock to his colleagues by fasting not just the mandatory 30 days but the optional six days succeeding the holy month as well.

“While fasting, I feel comfortable with the surroundings and feel it as a good practice to have better health physically and mentally.”



PERLITA P APLCA AND EL MALYN

This is our first Ramadhan, and we fasted as much as possible and, thanks to God Almighty, we are successful in achieving the results. We are undergoing spiritual refinement and physical and intellectual refurbishment as well



‘Nazaha’ helps to boost integrity: Survey

MUSCAT: The State Audit Institution (SAI) continues broadcasting its Nazaha (integrity) programme broadcast on public and private TV and radio channels during the holy month of Ramadhan.

The programme, now in its sixth edition, aims to enhance communal and individual knowledge about the Sharia rulings related to ways of dealing with the public fund and the duties towards the public job.

The episodes of the programme dealt with several key topics pertaining to the protection of public fund, the importance of institutional and social partnership in uplifting the efficiency of public funds. It revolves around the sanctity of the public fund, the dangers of bribery and embezzlement, and the efficiency of using financial resources. Some episodes revolved around the duties and liabilities of the public office and the importance of cooperation in enhancing institutional performance, boosting job loyalty and institutional affiliation, the positive work environment, and motivation to career competence. This is in addition to other topics related to the values of integrity, personal ethics, self-monitoring and job ethics.

A group of people has been



Dr Fayza bint Ahmed al Raei



Ahmed bin Said Kashoob



Majid bin Said al Hadabi



Khalfan bin Hamad al Zaidi



Zainab bint Zahir al Nassriyah

polled to identify their opinions on episodes of Nazaha in its sixth season.

Dr Fayza bint Ahmed al Raei, consultant dermatologist, said: “The programme discusses important issues related to public money, and presents real examples of interest to all a wide segment of society. It provides the legal opinion to prevent or limit abuses. This is a meaningful and sound work that society needs and I propose that the programme includes interviews with the general public to measure their opinions and suggestions on the topics raised.”

Ahmed bin Said Kashoob, producer and presenter of the Economic Forum programme, said that the value of self-monitoring does not begin at the institution but rather is an implant that begins at home which is why

Nazaha programme comes to enhance the concept of integrity, transparency and accountability in light of the conflicting global changes and the digital revolution which requires all of us to devote the concept of self-monitoring, to strengthen and activate it and to instil fear of God first and then the penalties resulting from those heinous acts and their impact on the individual, family and society. He added that the Nazaha programme includes a set of episodes that address all segments of society in an easy way that touches the life reality of the community.

Majid bin Said al Hadabi, Coordination and Follow-up Supervisor at the Ministry of Education, points out that the most important feature of Nazaha programme is its focus on strengthening self-monitoring

as it is considered one of the finest types of supervision to prevent all forms of corruption or infringement of public funds and dereliction of duty. He stressed the importance of focusing on reviving self-monitoring and building a balanced personality and linking it to religious faith.

Khalfan bin Hamad al Zaidi, author and journalist, said that raising awareness with regard to preserving public money, honesty at work and avoiding suspicions are essential to protect the employee from falling into accountability, adding that the awareness and educational programme Nazaha contributed significantly to achieving these goals. The programme was able to provide answers to many questions related to public money and job duties and rights.

Zainab bint Zahir al

Nassriyah, local news editor at Oman Daily Observer, said that Nazaha is one of the programmes that touches on real issues pertaining to important cognitive aspects in the employee’s life in particular and the general public. Hence, the programme managed to reach a large segment of people and its video clips are widely circulated on social media.

For further development and modernisation, Al Nassriyah suggests displaying some abuse cases in the programme and highlighting the success of the programme in addressing all issues related to the public job, such as good time management, effective use of work tools and other aspects that the employee must take into account, and she called on everyone to benefit from the programme, which is available on SAI platforms.

Rain and hail in northern governorates

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

Scattered rain with thunder in several areas of the governorates of North and South Al Batinah, Al Buraimi, Al Dhahirah and Al Dakhiliyah, accompanied by active downward winds and hail, were experienced on Wednesday.

The weather report for Thursday forecasts an advection of medium and high clouds over most of the governorates with a chance of convective clouds development and isolated rain occasionally thundershowers over

Al Hajar Mountains and adjoining areas towards the afternoon.

There are chances of late night to early morning low-level clouds or fog patches over parts of South Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates.

A thunderstorm advisory issued by the Oman Met Office indicated storms in Ibra, Bahla, Shinas, Mahdha, Bukha, Rustaq, Ibri, Saiq, Al Sinaina, Samayil, Nizwa, Al Hamra, Izki, Jabal Shams, Liwa, Suwaiq, Buraimi, Madha, Suhar, Khasab, Dibba and Yanqul.

There has been continuous formation of cumulus clouds over parts of North and South Al Batinah and Al Dakhiliyah, with chances of rain, and thunderstorms at times, accompanied by active downward winds and hail.

Oman, Kazakhstan celebrate 3 decades of cooperation

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Kazakhstan on Wednesday marked the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries.

A communique issued by the two countries said that the last three decades contributed to bolstering the bilateral relations in various fields on the basis of mutual respect of sovereignty, the

integrity of lands and non-interference in internal affairs.

The communique added that mutual visits, bilateral consultations and forming parliamentary friendship associations contributed to promoting the cooperation and relations between the two countries.

It also said that joint coordination led to an increased support in several international positions.

The Sultanate of Oman and Kazakhstan also reiterated their keenness in promoting cooperation in all spheres.

The communique affirmed that the two countries laid the foundations for consolidating fruitful cooperation in various political fields related to regional and international issues, as well as in economic, cultural and scientific arenas. — ONA

End Israel’s occupation of Palestinian lands

FROM PAGE 1

Oman urged the global community to shoulder its responsibilities and apply justice and law by ending the occupation and achieve peace through the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to set up

their own independent state on all the lands — occupied by Israel since June 6, 1967 — with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Sultanate of Oman described the situation in the Palestinian lands as highly alarming.

It also warned that inaction

by the UN Security Council encourages the occupying Israeli authorities to practise more aggressions and violations.

Oman said that the Security Council must undertake practical steps to protect the Palestinians who are suffering under the Israeli occupation. — ONA

State Council’s office discusses empowerment of teachers

MUSCAT: The State Council’s Office held a regular meeting under the chairmanship of Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman, on Wednesday. The office discussed a study presented by the Education and Research Committee on empowering Omani teachers.

The office also reviewed a study on the effectiveness of public spending and another study on the future availability of water in the country.



ABB LLC Oman



Date of the campaign: 28/4/2022

Campaign type: Electrical

Campaign section: Circuit Breaker

Product description: Residual Current Circuit Breaker with Overcurrent Protection

The number of affected Product	The year of production	Product model
17,582 Pieces	Feb 2021 to Dec 2021	DSE 201M

Description of defect: A component issue in the **ABB DSE201 M** product range under certain installation conditions, in some rare cases, may result in the **DSE201 M** not opening.

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البنك الوطني العماني
لدول مجلس التعاون الخليجي
National Bank of Oman GCC Fund

National Bank of Oman GCC Fund

Investment Manager Report
For the quarter ending 31st March 2022

The quarter ended 31st March 2022, saw all GCC markets continue its uptrend despite the rise in Geo-Political tension with Russia's invasion into Ukraine and the likelihood of tightening of Global liquidity due to Fed measures. Abu Dhabi market continued to lead the GCC pack once again during the quarter after a huge surge in 2021. The region continued to benefit from the recovery post diminishing Covid- 19 cases. Although, global cues remained negative with China reporting fresh lockdowns and US market struggling to cope with heated inflation and other macro factors.

The NBO GCC Fund sustained its growth momentum and reported a gain of 15.28%. The restructuring of the portfolio and increased allocation to KSA and banking sector contributed largely to the gains. The fund's US positions were the key laggards as all stocks ended the quarter in the red.

The GCC markets enjoyed both the elevated oil prices and increasing regional oil production which shall help ease the government books and drive real GDP growth. Overall GCC market index grew 15.8% in 1Q, this was largely supported by ADX which gained 17.2%, Qatar and Saudi Arabia followed with gains of 16.4% and 16.0% respectively. Saudi market had 6 IPOs including Nahdi Medical, the largest offering since Aramco. DFM market welcomed its biggest listing of Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) and added 10.3% for the quarter. Kuwait market added 15.7% gain, while Oman's MSX saw a recovery in March and ended with modest gains of 1.8%.

All four major US equity indices posted negative returns for the first quarter of 2022, although the S&P 500 and the Dow Industrials saw only mild losses compared to the Nasdaq and Russell 2000. Investors rotated out of growth-oriented and high P/E technology stocks into sectors that were more exposed to the traditional economy which, trade at a cheaper valuation relative to the tech sector. That rotation benefitted the Dow Jones Industrial Average primarily while the Nasdaq Composite badly lagged both the S&P 500 and the Dow.

Moreover, despite recent weakness, the disruption caused on the supply front pushed crude oil prices to a 7-quarter high growth of almost 40% during Q1-2022. The volatility in oil prices saw prices reaching a 14-year intraday high of \$139.1/b during the first week of March 2022 but closed the month at \$107.9/b.

Going forward, the fund is fundamentally well positioned to benefit from the pockets of opportunities in the region. We believe that sectors like banking and real estate could continue to lead and with oil prices at current levels, even the petchem sector may have some more legs to rally. Stretching Geo-political issues and tightening of liquidity may provide some sentimental drags, but eventually the opening themes and improvement in year over year profits could drive the markets further in the region.

INTERIM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2022			
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			
	31 March 2022	31 March 2021	31 December 2021
	RO	RO	RO
ASSETS			
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	13,351,217	7,932,671	12,001,496
Cash and cash equivalents	409,316	2,016,414	134,577
Dividends receivable	69,649	13,514	306
Total assets	13,830,182	9,962,599	12,136,379
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	124,329	135,229	247,959
Total liabilities	124,329	135,229	247,959
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	13,705,853	9,827,370	11,888,420
Net asset value per unit	1.070	0.766	0.928
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
	31 March 2022	31 March 2021	31 December 2021
	RO	RO	RO
	(3 months)	(3 months)	(12 months)
INCOME			
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	1,581,611	255,910	2,241,695
Net realised gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	118,374	128,720	408,787
Dividend income	197,977	82,932	264,173
Interest income	500	5,778	6,030
Foreign exchange gain	--	10,062	--
Other income	576	--	1,079
	1,899,038	483,402	2,921,764
EXPENSES			
Performance fees	--	--	181,462
Management fees	36,281	26,136	117,592
Fund Management Body fees	14,000	7,000	35,000
Brokerage expenses	9,574	12,853	34,068
Foreign exchange loss	8,935	--	2,169
General and administration	5,468	2,171	17,373
Administrator fees	4,947	3,699	16,173
Custodian fees	2,400	2,367	9,600
	81,605	54,226	413,437
Net profit and total comprehensive income for the period / year	1,817,433	429,176	2,508,327
Net profit per unit	0.142	0.033	0.196

Investment Manager & Administrator

البنك الوطني العماني
NBO

Note: The complete accounts, in Arabic or English as requested, will be sent by mail to any shareholder within 7 days of a written request addressed to the Administrator, Investment Banking Operations, National Bank of Oman, P.O.Box 751, PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman. Tel: 24778757, Fax: 24778993 Email: GCCFund@nbo.co.om



Suu Kyi handed five-year jail term for graft

YANGON: A Myanmar junta court on Wednesday sentenced Aung San Suu Kyi to five years in jail for corruption, part of a barrage of criminal cases that could see the deposed civilian leader jailed for decades.

Suu Kyi has been in military custody since a coup ousted her government in February last year and plunged Myanmar into turmoil.

In the latest case, the Nobel laureate was accused of accepting a bribe of \$600,000 in cash and gold bars.

After two days of delays, the special court in the military-built capital Naypyidaw handed down its verdict and sentence at 9:30 am on Wednesday. “Regarding taking gold and dollars from U Phyo Min Thein, the court sentenced her to five years’ imprisonment,” junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun said.

“She will be under house arrest. I do not know whether she asked for appeal. They are working according to the legal way. As far

Local media reports Suu Kyi plans to appeal the conviction for corruption as she still faces a raft of other criminal charges

as I know, she’s in good health.”

Local media, citing unnamed sources close to the court, later reported she plans to appeal Wednesday’s conviction for corruption.

Suu Kyi still faces a raft of other criminal charges, including violating the official secrets act, corruption and electoral fraud, and could be jailed for more than 100 years if convicted on all counts.

The 76-year-old had already been sentenced to six years in jail for incitement against the military, breaching Covid-19 rules and breaking a telecommunications law — although she will remain



under house arrest while she fights other charges.

She has not appealed any of those convictions.

Journalists have been barred from attending the court hearings and Suu Kyi’s lawyers have been banned from speaking to the

media.

Under a previous junta regime, Suu Kyi spent long spells under house arrest in her family mansion in Yangon, Myanmar’s largest city.

Today, she is confined to an undisclosed location in the capital, with her link to the outside world

limited to brief pre-trial meetings with her lawyers.

“The days of Aung San Suu Kyi as a free woman are effectively over,” Phil Robertson Deputy Asia Director, Human Rights Watch said.

“Destroying popular democracy in Myanmar also means getting rid of Aung San Suu Kyi, and the junta is leaving nothing to chance.”

The coup sparked widespread protests and unrest which the military sought to crush by force. According to a local monitoring group, the crackdown has left more than 1,700 civilians dead and seen some 13,000 arrested.

Suu Kyi has been the face of Myanmar’s democratic hopes for more than 30 years, but her earlier six-year sentence already meant she is likely to miss elections the junta has said it plans to hold by next year.

Independent Myanmar analyst David Mathieson said the junta was using the criminal cases to make Suu Kyi “politically irrelevant”.

“This is just another squalid step in solidifying the coup,” he said. “This is politically motivated pure and simple.”

Many of her political allies have also been arrested since the coup, with one chief minister sentenced to 75 years in jail, while many others have been forced into hiding.

A tranche of ousted lawmakers from her National League for Democracy (NLD) formed a parallel “National Unity Government” (NUG) in a bid to undermine the junta’s legitimacy.

However, the NUG holds no territory and has not been recognised by any foreign government.

Numerous “People’s Defence Force” (PDF) civilian militias have sprung up around the country to take the fight to the junta.

Analysts say Myanmar’s heavily armed, well-trained army has been surprised by the effectiveness of the PDFs and in some areas struggled to contain them. — AFP

Landmines in Tripoli kill 130 over two years: HRW

TRIPOLI: At least 130 people, mainly civilians, have been killed by landmines and other explosives left after heavy fighting in 2020 around the Libyan capital, Human Rights Watch said on Wednesday.

The explosives, including banned antipersonnel landmines and booby-trapped explosives, were scattered in the suburbs of Tripoli during heavy fighting in 2019-2020, when the powerful eastern-based military strongman Khalifa Haftar tried to capture the capital.

While Haftar withdrew from Tripoli in June 2020, with Libya’s rival camps signing a ceasefire later that year, the dangerous legacy remains.

“Forces allied with Khalifa Haftar laid landmines and improvised explosive devices that have killed and maimed several hundred civilians including children, and hinder southern Tripoli residents from returning home,” said HRW’s Libya director Hanan Salah.

“Antipersonnel mines are banned because they indiscriminately kill civilians both during fighting and long after the conflict ends.”

HRW, quoting figures from the defence ministry’s Libyan Mine



Forces allied with Khalifa Haftar laid landmines and improvised explosive devices that have killed and maimed several hundred civilians

HANAN SALAH
HRW’s Libya director

Action Centre, said at least 130 people had been killed, 200 people injured, and thousands forced to leave their homes.

It calculated that landmines and other explosive ordnance had “contaminated” some 720 square kilometres in southern Tripoli.

The North African country was thrown into chaos after a 2011 Nato-backed uprising toppled and led to the killing of long-

time ruler Muammar Gaddafi. Fighting drew in regional powers and foreign mercenaries.

Turkey sent in troops as well as pro-Ankara fighter units from Syria to shore up the Tripoli government, while Russia’s Wagner group deployed mercenaries backing Haftar.

“So far, no commanders or Libyan and foreign fighters responsible for serious abuses during the 2019-2020 Tripoli war have been held to account,” Salah said. “International action is needed for credible prosecutions to happen.”

Clearing the landmines is a major challenge.

As well as funding shortfalls and a lack of expertise, efforts to remove the landmines have been hampered by “fragmented governance and insufficient coordination among government agencies and humanitarian groups,” HRW said.

Libya remains split between rival forces, with two opposing executives in place since February.

Earlier this month, a rival government selected by parliament in the east met for the first time, challenging a cabinet brokered by the UN and based in the capital Tripoli in the west. — AFP

■ ON A MISSION FOR PEACE



Vietnamese forces taking part in the United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan salute in front of a Royal Australian Air Force aircraft before their departure in Hanoi. — AFP

Bilawal appointed new Pakistan FM

ISLAMABAD: The scion of Pakistan’s most influential political dynasty was appointed foreign minister on Wednesday, the latest step up a ladder likely to take Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to the top of the country’s leadership.

Aged 33, Bhutto becomes one of the world’s youngest foreign ministers but inherits a diplomatic bag of issues that started well before he was born — including relations with India.

Bhutto was sworn in two weeks after he helped lead an alliance that toppled Imran Khan and saw Shehbaz Sharif become prime minister.



His first foreign mission in the role will be accompanying Sharif on Thursday to Saudi Arabia, a key trade partner and regular source of relief for Pakistan’s struggling economy. Bhutto is the son of assassinated former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and ex-president Asif Ali Zardari, as well

as the grandson of another former premier, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

His grandfather also served as foreign minister in the mid-1960s and was the founder of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) that Bhutto now leads.

He became party leader aged just 19, while a student at Oxford University, following his mother’s assassination in 2007.

She, in turn, had taken over the party’s stewardship from her mother Nusrat, who became chairwoman following the execution of her husband Zulfikar in 1979 under military ruler Zia-ul-Haq. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

BEIRUT

Four Syrian soldiers killed in attack

Four Syrian government soldiers are dead after an Israeli missile attack near Damascus, Syrian state media reported. Syria’s official news agency Sana said, citing a military source, that the “enemy” had carried out a missile attack, targeting points in the vicinity of Damascus.

It added that Syrian air defences had confronted the missiles and downed most of them. “Four soldiers were martyred and three others were injured in the aggression, which



also caused some material damages,” the agency said without elaborating. The war monitor, confirmed the attack and said at least nine soldiers were killed.

— AFP

COLOMBO

Police officer arrested over Lanka protest death

A top Sri Lankan police officer was arrested on Wednesday after ordering his subordinates to fire on anti-government protesters, in clashes that left one man dead and nearly 30 others wounded. Last week’s demonstration in the town of Rambukkana was one of many around the country protesting a rise in fuel prices in the island nation, which is suffering through a crippling economic crisis.

Police used tear gas and live rounds to disperse the crowd,



which had blockaded a busy highway and railway line linking the capital Colombo with the central city of Kandy. Senior Superintendent K B Keerthiratne was taken into custody. — AFP

KHARTOUM

Sudan releases 2nd key civilian figure in 2 days

Sudanese authorities released a former member of the ruling Sovereign Council, a lawyer said, the second key civilian figure to be freed in two days. “Mohamed al Fekki has been released,” defence lawyer Azhari al Haj said, more than two months after the politician was detained on February 13. Earlier, authorities released Khaled Youssef, a former minister and prominent opponent of a military coup led by army chief Abdel Fattah al Burhan on October 25 last



year. The military’s power grab derailed a fragile transition to civilian rule that had been established in the wake of longtime ruler Omar al Bashir’s fall from power in 2019. — AFP



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In brief

■ MOSCOW/WASHINGTON



RUSSIA, US EMBARK ON SURPRISE PRISONER SWAP

Russia and the United States have carried out a long-discussed prisoner swap, but one that still came as a surprise. Russia released US citizen Trevor Reed and received Konstantin Yaroshenko, convicted in the US, in exchange, the Russian Foreign Ministry announced on Wednesday. US President Joe Biden confirmed Reed's release in Washington. Biden and his Russian counterpart Putin had discussed the exchange at their summit meeting in Geneva last year. In view of the tense relations between the two countries, drastically exacerbated by the Ukraine war, this development is unexpected.

■ BRAZZAVILLE



DR CONGO STARTS VACCINATING AGAINST EBOLA OUTBREAK

The Democratic Republic of Congo launched a vaccination campaign after two people died of Ebola in the northwestern town of Mbandaka, the World Health Organization's Africa office announced. It's the 14th outbreak of the killer virus in the country since 1976, including six since 2018. "Over the years, with the support of WHO and other partners and donors, the country has developed homegrown expertise capable of mounting effective Ebola response," said a statement from the UN's health arm.

"With effective vaccines at hand and the experience of the Democratic Republic of the Congo health workers in Ebola response, we can quickly change the course of this outbreak for the better," said WHO regional director for Africa Matshidiso Moeti. — AFP

■ COPENHAGEN



FINNISH PRESIDENT RECOVERING AFTER COVID INFECTION

Finnish President Sauli Niinistö is on the path of recovery after having been in hospital due to ongoing Covid-19 symptoms, he wrote in a post on Facebook on Wednesday. He suffered from pneumonia after his Covid-19 infection, but received the best possible treatment, the 73-year-old politician wrote. The inflammation and fever were receding and he would continue to recover at home.

Niinistö tested positive for Covid-19 last week. The presidential office had announced on Tuesday that he would be examined in hospital due to ongoing symptoms.

Russia says it destroyed Western weapons



Activists hold banners during a meeting to urge foreign leaders and international organisation to help provide humanitarian corridors for evacuation civilians and Ukrainian servicemen from Mariupol in central Kyiv. — AFP

KHARKIV: Russia said on Wednesday it had destroyed a large quantity of Western-supplied weapons in Ukraine, while halting gas supplies to EU and Nato members Poland and Bulgaria in a move Brussels branded attempted blackmail.

With the conflict that has claimed thousands of lives entering its third month, Ukraine conceded Russian forces had pushed deeper into the country's east and captured several villages, as Moscow intensifies a renewed offensive to take control of Donbas.

Russia's defence ministry said its forces had destroyed the "large batch" of weapons and ammunition supplied by the United States and European countries using long-range missile strikes on southeastern Ukraine.

They targeted hangers at an aluminium plant near the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia with "high-precision long-range sea-based Kalibr missiles", the ministry said, without specifying the weapons destroyed.

It comes a day after a summit in Germany of 40 Western allies to discuss arms supplies to Ukraine

Zelensky invited to G20 summit

BERLIN: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky says he has been invited to the meeting of the group of 20 leading industrialised nations (G20) in Bali in the autumn. "I am grateful for the invitation to attend the G20 summit," Zelensky wrote on his Twitter account. According to the account, the invitation was extended by Indonesian President Joko Widodo in a telephone conversation. Indonesia is hosting the G20 summit this year. The meeting is scheduled for November 15-16 on the island of Bali.

The invitation is pointed because Russia, which attacked Ukraine on February 24 to international condemnation, is a member of the G20. Russian President Vladimir Putin "intends to come to the G20 meeting," Russian Ambassador to Indonesia Lyudmila Voroobyova said at the end of March. — dpa

where Washington pledged to move "heaven and earth" to enable

Kyiv to emerge victorious.

Tensions are also rising in a breakaway region of Moldova bordering southwestern Ukraine, where the interior ministry said that shots had been fired at a village housing a Russian arms depot after drones flew over from Ukraine.

The unrecognised region has reported a series of explosions in recent days that it called "terrorist attacks", leading Kyiv to accuse Moscow of seeking to expand the war further into Europe.

Russia's energy giant Gazprom said it had stopped all gas supplies to Poland and highly dependent Bulgaria, after not receiving payment in rubles from the two EU and Nato members.

President Vladimir Putin last month warned Moscow will only accept payment for deliveries in its national currency, with buyers required to set up ruble accounts or have their taps turned off.

The Kremlin is grappling with the fallout from numerous rounds of European and US sanctions that have targeted various sectors and left it unable to utilise foreign currency, including its own reserves. — AFP

Measles cases surge 80pc, other diseases could follow: UN

PARIS: Measles cases have surged by nearly 80 per cent worldwide this year, the UN said on Wednesday, warning that the rise of the "canary in a coal mine" illness indicates that outbreaks of other diseases are likely on the way.

The coronavirus pandemic has interrupted vaccination campaigns for non-Covid diseases around the world, creating a "perfect storm" that could put millions of children's lives at risk, the UN's children's agency Unicef and the World Health Organization said in a statement.

More than 17,300 measles cases were reported globally in January and February, compared to around 9,600 during those months last year, according to new data from the UN agencies.

There have been 21 large and disruptive measles outbreaks in the last 12 months to April, most of them in Africa and the eastern Mediterranean, the data showed.

Christopher Gregory, senior health adviser in Unicef's immunisation section, said that because measles is the "most contagious vaccine-preventable disease" it often serves as a warning sign.

"Measles is what we call

the tracer, or the canary in the coal mine, that really shows us where those weaknesses in the immunisation system are," he said.

He said yellow fever was among the diseases that could surge next, after rising cases were reported in West Africa.

"We're particularly worried about those countries that are most fragile, where the healthcare systems are already really struggling, where they're still trying to deal with the impacts of Covid on top of these outbreaks," he said.

Somalia recorded by far the most measles cases in the last 12 months with more than 9,000, the UN data showed, followed by Yemen, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Ethiopia — all countries battling some form of conflict.

There are also fears that the war in Ukraine could spark a resurgence in the country after it recorded Europe's highest rate of measles between 2017-2019.

Gregory said that it had been very difficult to keep track of any disease in Ukraine since the war began, adding that the biggest concern was "what we could be missing". — AFP



SpaceX launches its latest crew to ISS for Nasa

WASHINGTON: Days after a SpaceX Dragon capsule crewed by wealthy adventurers splashed down off Florida's coast, another launched on Wednesday, this time for a Nasa mission to the International Space Station.

The Crew-4 mission blasted off from the Kennedy Space Center at 3:52 am, carrying Americans Kjell Lindgren, Bob Hines and Jessica Watkins, as well as Italian Samantha Cristoforetti of the European Space Agency.

The event was livestreamed on NASA's website and social media.

The rapid turnaround time for SpaceX — a little under 40 hours between recovering one crew and sending up another — is a sign of an increasingly busy human spaceflight calendar since Elon Musk's company became Nasa's mainstay astronaut taxi in 2020.

Between 2011 — when the Space Shuttle programme ended — and 2020, Nasa was reliant on Russian Soyuz rockets for the service.

"Think how the Cape has



Astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti of the European Space Agency takes a picture during the Crew-4 walk out en route to launch complex 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. — AFP

transformed, think about all of those abandoned launchpads on the Cape, and how they are roaring back to life," Nasa Administrator Bill Nelson said in a press call on

Tuesday.

Crew-4 will join the Crew-3 quartet, who are approaching the end of their five-month rotation on the ISS, as well as three Russians on

the Russian segment of the orbital outpost. A date for Crew-3's return will be set soon.

Crew-4 is due to carry out hundreds of scientific experiments,

Crew-4 is due to carry out hundreds of scientific experiments, including ongoing research into growing plants without soil in space

including ongoing research into growing plants without soil in space.

Another involves developing an artificial human retina, leveraging the microgravity environment of the ISS to help deposit layer after layer of thin films of protein.

The technology "could eventually be used to replace damaged photoreceptor cells in the eyes and potentially restore meaningful vision to the millions of people who suffer from retinal degenerative disease," said Nasa scientist Heidi Parris. Among the crewmates, Watkins is only the fifth Black woman to go to space, and the first to join the crew of the ISS on an extended mission. — AFP

We live in a world of bytes



Dr Anchan C K

The writer is an international advisor on business and economy

Today’s business reality is very different. We live in a world of bytes – and for the first time technology and commerce have collided in a way that makes data far more valuable than physical, tangible objects.

Money is arguably one of humanity’s most important inventions. From beaver pelts to gold bars, the form and function of money has constantly fluctuated throughout history.

In the modern world, the definition of money is blurrier than ever. Central banks have opted to create trillions of dollars of currency out of thin air since the financial crisis – and on the flip side, you can actually use blockchain technology to create your own competing cryptocurrency in just a few clicks.

Interpreting massive amounts of

data on how the world is changing can be taxing for even the most brilliant thinkers. After all, science says that 65 per cent of people are visual learners – so why not put data in a language they can understand?

Combine this connectedness with rapidly changing demographics, shifting values and attitudes, growing political uncertainty, and exponential advances in technology, and it’s clear the next decade is setting up to be one of historic transformation.

With each passing year, an increasingly large segment of the population no longer remembers images loading a single pixel row at a time, the ear-splitting sound of a 56k modem, or the early domination of web portals.

Many of the top websites in 1998

NEW PRODUCTS CAN
ACHIEVE MILLIONS OF USERS
IN JUST MONTHS, AND THE
GAME POKÉMON GO SERVES
AS AN INTERESTING CASE
STUDY OF THIS POTENTIAL

were news aggregators or search portals, which are easy concepts to understand. Today, brand touch-points are often spread out between devices namely mobile apps vs desktop and a myriad of services and sub-brands e.g. Facebook’s constellation of apps.

As a result, the world’s biggest websites are complex, interconnected web.

There are many facets of change that will impact our shared future. When it comes to technological

progress, the rate of change itself is actually getting faster and faster. Each year brings more technological advancements than the last, innovations could happen at a blindsiding pace.

With billions of people hyper-connected to each other in an unprecedented global network, it allows for an almost instantaneous and friction less spread of new ideas and innovations.

Interestingly, there is another offshoot of accelerating change that applies more to the business and economic world. Not only is the speed of change getting faster, but for various reasons, markets are able to adopt new technologies faster:

The tech invasion is leveraging connectivity, network effects, artificial intelligence and

unprecedented scale to create global platforms that are almost impossible to compete with.

New products can achieve millions of users in just months and the game Pokémon Go serves as an interesting case study of this potential. The game amassed 50 million users in just 19 days, which is a blink of an eye in comparison to automobiles -62 years, the telephone — 50 years, or credit cards -28 years.

As new technologies are created at a faster and faster pace – and as they are adopted at record speeds by markets – it’s fair to say that future could be coming at a breakneck speed, yes arguably one of humanity’s most important inventions, which has limitless end.

A new era of power — should we say Power of Super computers.

Overuse, climate change kill off Iraq’s Sawa Lake

TONY GAMAL-GABRIEL

A “No Fishing” sign on the edge of Iraq’s western desert is one of the few clues that this was once Sawa Lake, a biodiverse wetland and recreational landmark. Human activity and climate change have combined to turn the site into a barren wasteland with piles of salt.

Abandoned hotels and tourist facilities here hark back to the 1990s when the salt lake, circled by sandy banks, was in its heyday and popular with newly-weds and families who came to swim and picnic.

But today, the lake near the city of Samawa, south of the capital Baghdad, is completely dry.

Bottles litter its former banks and plastic bags dangle from sun-scorched shrubs, while two pontoons have been reduced to rust.

“This year, for the first time, the lake has disappeared,” environmental activist Husam Subhi said. “In previous years, the water area had decreased during the dry seasons.” Today, on the sandy ground sprinkled with salt, only a pond remains where tiny fish swim, in a source that connects the lake to an underground water table.

The five-square-kilometre lake has been drying up since 2014, says Youssef Jabbar, environmental department head of Muthana province.

The causes have been “climate change and rising temperatures,” he explained. “Muthana is a desert province, it suffers from drought and lack of rainfall.”

A government statement issued last week also pointed to “more than 1,000 wells illegally dug” for agriculture in the area.

Additionally, nearby cement and salt factories have “drained significant amounts of water from the groundwater that feeds the lake”, Jabbar said.

It would take nothing short of a miracle to bring Sawa Lake back to life. Use of aquifers would have to be curbed and, following three years of drought, the area would now need several seasons of abundant rainfall, in a country hit by desertification and regarded as one of the five most vulnerable to climate change. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, a global treaty, recognised Sawa as “unique... because it is a closed water body in an area of sabkha (salt flat) with no inlet or outlet.

“The lake is formed over limestone rock and is isolated by gypsum barriers surrounding the lake; its water chemistry is unique,” says the convention’s website. A stopover for migratory birds, the lake was once “home to several globally vulnerable species” such as the eastern imperial eagle, houbara bustard and marbled duck.

Sawa is not the only body of water in Iraq facing the perils of drought. Iraqi social media is often filled with photos of grotesquely cracked soil, such as in the Unesco-listed Howeiza marshes in the south, or Razzaza Lake in the central province of Karbala.

— AFP

Sacrifices of unnamed Ukrainian soldiers



Thomas L Friedman

The writer is an American political commentator and author

I am thinking about three people today whose behaviour could have a significant impact on the world in the coming months and possibly years: a soldier with no name, a politician with no shame and a leader with no soul.

The first I admire, the second we should have nothing but contempt for and the third must forever be known as a war enemy.

The unnamed soldier is the thousands of Ukrainians — those in uniform and those civilian men and women — who are defending their country’s nascent democracy against Vladimir Putin’s attempt to wipe Ukraine off the map.

Whether they are professionally trained soldiers or “babushkas” using their smartphones to call in coordinates of Russian tanks hiding in the forest behind their farms, their willingness to anonymously fight and die to preserve Ukraine’s freedom and culture is the ultimate refutation of Putin’s claim that Ukraine is not a “real” country but rather an integral part of Russia’s “own history, culture and spiritual space.” We don’t know their names — I can’t name a single Ukrainian general, despite all their success so far — but their deeds have shown Putin that the country they are fighting for is very real, very distinct and willing to ferociously defend itself.

If Ukraine’s leaders choose to cut a peace deal with Russia, we should help bolster them in negotiations, but as long as they choose to fight, we should help arm them. Because they are not just defending Ukraine, they are defending the possibility of a Europe whole and free — where one country cannot simply devour another. That doesn’t just make for a better Europe, it makes for a better world.

The second person I am thinking about is Kevin McCarthy, the Republican leader in the House — a man who, we now know, did not have the courage to stick with his own fleeting manifestation of courage.

We are indebted to the reporting by my Times colleagues Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns to fully appreciate how much McCarthy’s behaviour is a profile in cowardice in four acts:

Act 1: Martin and Burns quote McCarthy as having told his GOP colleagues about his feelings about President Donald Trump in the immediate aftermath of the January 6,



Ukrainians manning defensive trenches on the outskirts of Kyiv pose for a photo after an Easter service last week.

2021, attack on the Capitol. “I’ve had it with this guy,” McCarthy said, and described Trump’s actions on January 6 as “atrocious and totally wrong.” Trump was likely to be impeached, McCarthy said, so he intended to recommend to him, “you should resign.”

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Act 2: After these revelations were published last Thursday morning, McCarthy issues a statement declaring that “The New York Times’ reporting on me is totally false and wrong.”

Act 3. That night, thanks to a leaked audio recording posted by the Times and aired on Rachel Maddow’s MSNBC show, the whole world got to hear McCarthy telling a January 10 House

Republican leadership conference that his plan was to tell Trump that his impeachment “will pass and it would be my recommendation you should resign” — exactly what McCarthy hours earlier had denied saying.

Act 4. McCarthy — instead of apologising to his constituents and the American people for lying — calls Trump to explain himself and why he should remain in Trump’s good graces. Trump magnanimously pardons the bootlicking McCarthy for his sin of telling the truth.

The legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden liked to say that “the true test of a man’s character is what he does when no one is watching.”

Most lawmakers would want the world to believe that when everything was on the line for America, they told the truth and stood with the Constitution against a president trying to subvert it. That’s what McCarthy told his GOP colleagues privately was his stance.

But McCarthy then revealed his true character. When he realised that doing the right thing for the country might cost him Trump’s support and his dream of becoming speaker of the House, McCarthy ‘lied about telling the truth.’

And even worse, when McCarthy’s lying and bad character were exposed, many in his party backed him up anyway. — **The New York Times**

Misusing the spirit of charity!



Ali Al Matani
alimatani2@gmail.com

The charitable donations is one of the practices of the society. It is good if it is channelised through voluntary and civil society organisations. With the passage of time and technological advancements, now it is also being done electronically. The systemic work of

charitable donations has helped in reducing the burdens of the needy and deserving families. But there are some who are unfortunately misusing this spirit and come out on streets and public places and beg. In most cases, they do not deserve such donations and support. Many have made it their profession and collected thousands of rials, just by playing with the sentiments of the people. They approach in a way that anybody would become prey to their foul play. There are some who even use their children and elderly people, deploy them on streets and make them beg.

This is a disease which has entered into our society from outside. It has never been there. Therefore, it is important to fight and eradicate it. To deal with it, it is important to take care of the families which have hardships. The Ministry of Social Development could have some support programmes. Some charity organisations should also come forward to shoulder the burden of this segment of the society. But for this, the primary requirement would be that people should not

EVERYONE AMONG US SHOULD INTROSPECT AND SEE HOW MUCH HE OR SHE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPORTING SUCH WRONG ACTIVITIES

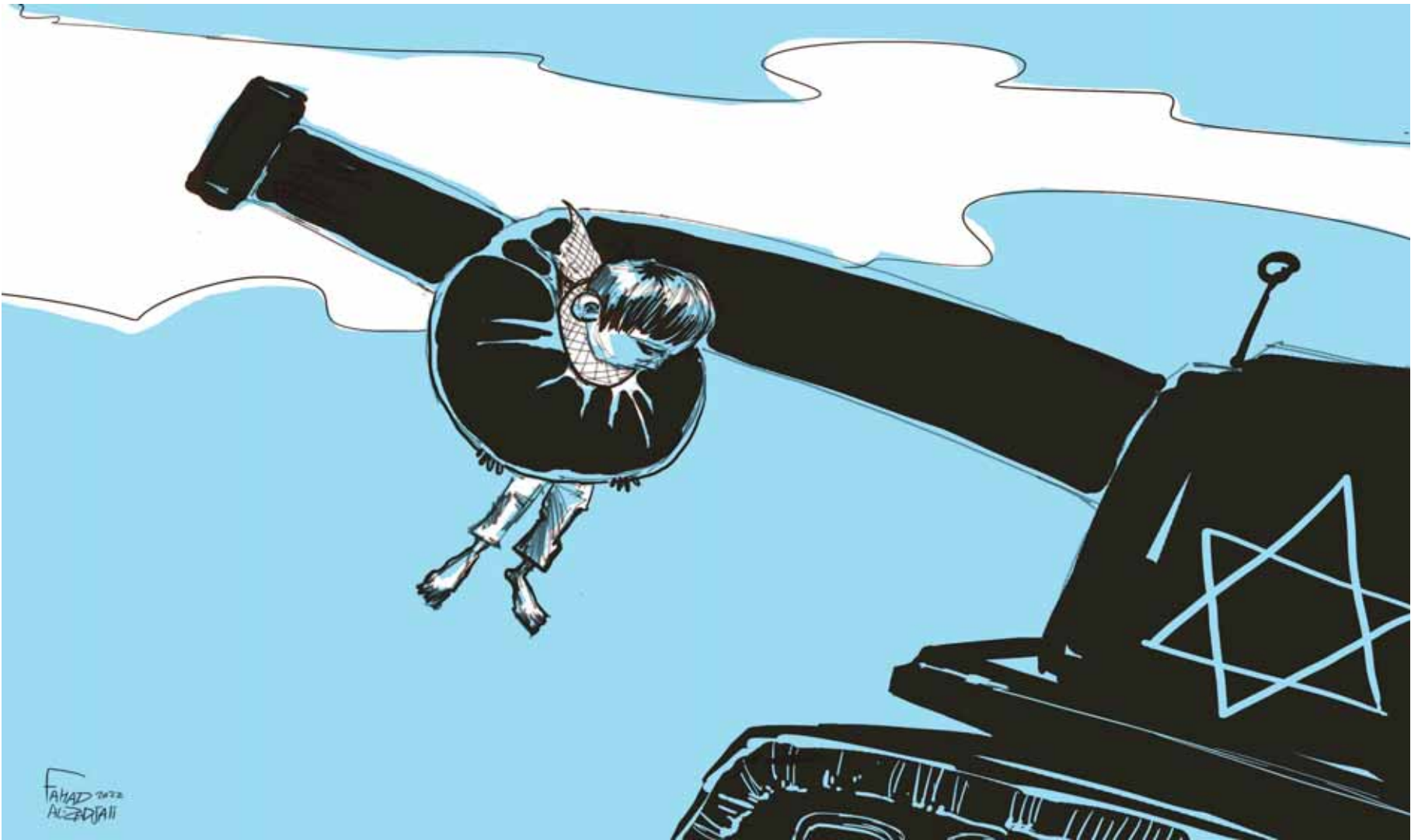
support those who resort to begging. They should direct their charitable donations to the right channels so that these bad practices are not encouraged. There is no doubt that the phenomenon of begging has recently increased. Despite the government and non-government level efforts, there is no sign of it being reduced. In many cases, it has emerged as a mafia which appear in various forms and

shapes. They deceive and win the sympathy of the people with kind hearts. You will see them after prayers in the mosques. You will find that some of them will stop their car near you and request you for some money for food or fuel. Some individuals would stop you suddenly when you are walking and request you to help them. You would find some of them standing right outside the ATMs and will catch you as soon as you come out. There are some who would send you video or audio clips on your phones or through your social media accounts asking for money. Many would also tell you how to transfer money to their accounts. If you would do so there are chances that you would be cheated.

The Ministry of Social Development is monitoring to get rid of these practices, guide the beggars in the right path, create awareness among people that they should avoid encouraging such practices and help them through charity organisations. This is also a fact that many of us are helping this disease to grow in society. Everyone among us should introspect and see how much he or she is responsible for supporting such wrong activities.

Whatever these beggars are doing is against the rules, regulations and approach of the government. We unfortunately do not realise that when we come forward and help these beggars, we violate these rules, oppose the vision and help such a dirty practice grow in the society. When we do all this, we actually harm the approach that the government or the organisation concerned will reach out to all those who are needy and deserving without allowing them to come out on streets and start begging. When we do so we open the flood gates to more serious and heinous crimes in the society which you cannot even imagine.

When I am talking about curbing begging in the society, I am not asking you to create a category in the society which is hated. Instead, I want that the support to the needy should be given through proper system and channel. The charitable donations or the money which we spend on charity should be distributed through the channels concerned. There are more than 30 charity and voluntary organisations in the country working day and night to support the needy.



Decarbonisation is now a strategic imperative

WERNER HOYER, JOSEP BORRELL

Russia’s war on Ukraine has forced the European Union to accelerate the pace of our energy and climate policy. Since the Kremlin has increasingly used energy as a tool for political influence, we must deprive it of its leverage by radically reducing our dependence on fossil-fuel imports from Russia.

The geopolitical rationale for doing so overlaps with the imperative to tackle climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s latest report on mitigation underscores the urgency of that task. Total greenhouse-gas emissions must peak by 2025 if we are to avoid a catastrophic increase in global temperatures. Moreover, the economy-wide shift to clean energy must be managed carefully to account for the inevitable social and economic consequences; it must be a “just transition.”

The EU and the European Investment Bank have a vital role to play in this transition. Investments in renewables, energy efficiency and innovative technologies such as green hydrogen are important tools for dealing with Russia’s aggression and helping to save the planet from dependence on fossil fuels. Every euro we spend on the energy transition at home is a euro we keep out of the hands of an authoritarian power that wages war. Every euro we spend on clean energy enhances our freedom to make our own decisions. Every euro we spend helping our international partners accelerate their own decarbonisation strategies is an investment in resilience and in the fight against climate change.

Since Russia’s war on February 24, the EU has been accelerating its energy transition plans to help end Europe’s reliance on Russian fossil-fuel imports as soon as possible. Although this will not happen overnight, the incentives to do so are now greater than ever. We can achieve energy independence by improving efficiency, diversifying supplies and ramping up renewables. This process requires a mobilisation at all levels — from supranational bodies down to households and individuals.

There are two important caveats to consider. First, the search for alternative suppliers of natural gas — critical as it is in the short-term — must not lock us into a new long-term dependence that requires heavy investments in fossil-fuel infrastructure. That would be costly, catastrophic for the planet, and ultimately unnecessary, given the more climate-conscious options that are available.

Second, we must not trade one bottleneck for another by swapping

our over-dependence on fossil fuels for over-dependency on raw materials needed for the green transition. These resources are heavily concentrated in just a handful of countries, not all of which hold the same values and interests as the EU. Strengthening the EU’s strategic autonomy and resilience must remain a key objective of the transition.

ALTHOUGH A RAPID REDUCTION IN GLOBAL GREENHOUSE-GAS EMISSIONS WAS ALREADY NEEDED TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE, THE TASK HAS BECOME DOUBLY URGENT IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA’S WEAPONISATION OF ENERGY SUPPLIES

Europe cannot do this alone. Winning the battle against climate change and standing up to Russian war are global challenges that demand a global response. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war has strengthened the strategic rationale for all countries to reduce their fossil-fuel imports and invest more in climate-friendly energy solutions.

That is why the EU is actively engaged in climate diplomacy. We want to encourage others to raise their climate ambitions, and we have committed considerable resources to working with partner countries so that they, too, can move to a resilient net-zero-emissions economy. Through the European Green

Deal and the EU’s new Global Gateway initiative, EU institutions and member states are mobilising up to €300 billion (\$325 billion) of investment in green and digital infrastructure to address the climate, biodiversity and energy crises.

Moreover, the EIB has pledged to support €1 trillion of investment in climate action and environmental sustainability by 2030. Through its new development arm, EIB Global, the bank is working with partners around the world to mobilise finance for energy efficiency, renewables and electricity grid projects.

Working as part of the EU’s joint effort under Team Europe, the EIB’s support for a clean-energy future ranges from investing in solar power in Senegal to financing more energy-efficient kindergartens in Armenia. The bank has also helped forge a Just Energy Transition Partnership with South Africa; provided backing for the India-based International Solar Alliance, which supports solar power development across 105 tropical countries; and signed on to an integrated water management and flood prevention scheme in Argentina.

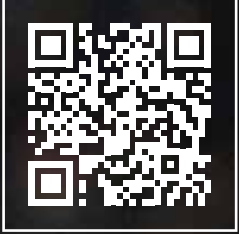
The EU stands ready to support the global community in ending its dependency on fossil fuels. Russia’s war on Ukraine is not a reason to delay investments in climate action. On the contrary, more green investment will give us more strategic autonomy. Decarbonisation has become a geopolitical imperative. We call on our global partners in government and across international financial institutions to join us in accelerating finance for clean energy. By pursuing climate neutrality, we can also achieve energy security.

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Children pose for a photo on the pedestal of the Soviet monument to Ukraine-Russia friendship dismantled by workers in Kyiv on Monday, amid Russian war on Ukraine. — AFP

sport



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MAN CITY MAKE THEIR CHAMPIONS LEAGUE MARK BUT BENZEMA KEEPS MADRID ALIVE

MANCHESTER: “We have to do a magical thing,” said Karim Benzema after Real Madrid performed another Houdini act in the Champions League to escape only 4-3 down from Tuesday’s thrilling semi-final, first leg against Manchester City.

Benzema set up what should be a special night at the Santiago Bernabeu on May 4 by scoring twice to take his tally for the season to 41 goals in as many games.

Without the Frenchman, Madrid’s quest for a 14th European crown would have long since sunk.

Benzema scored hat-tricks against both Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea in the past two rounds as Real walked a tightrope to reach the last four for the 30th time.

By contrast, this was just City’s third trip to the semi-finals, but the English champions justified their status as tournament favourites on the night the Etihad Stadium may finally have warmed to the Champions League.

The competition’s anthem was again lustily booed before kick-off by City fans who have not forgotten the financial fair play charges laid against their club by UEFA.

Had City not successfully appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, they would have been banned from the Champions League for the past two seasons.

Instead, they are 90 minutes away from reaching the final for a second consecutive season.

It was the first time the City fans had something to cheer in a semi-final.

When the sides met at this stage in 2016, Madrid edged a cagey tie 1-0 on aggregate.

Last season, City swept aside Paris Saint-Germain but in front of empty stadiums due to coronavirus restrictions.

This time it took just 10 minutes for Madrid to be clinging on to stay in the tie.

Kevin De Bruyne headed in after 90 seconds before Gabriel Jesus doubled the home side’s lead.

Riyad Mahrez and Phil Foden should

have put Real out of sight, but PSG and Chelsea had similar regrets only to be stung by the survival instincts of Carlo Ancelotti’s men.

“When you lose it isn’t good,” said Ancelotti, dismissing suggestions he should be pleased to have escaped still alive in the tie.

“It is easy to read this game, we were good on the ball and bad without it.”

The holy grail

Once again it was left to Benzema to dig Los Blancos out of the mire by halving the deficit before half-time.

A wild second half raged from end to end as Foden and Bernardo Silva extended City’s advantage, only to be pegged back by Vinicius Junior’s stunning solo run and finish before Benzema had the final word from the penalty spot.

“No one can say they didn’t enjoy it,” said Guardiola. “It was a good advertisement for football.”

Eleven years have passed since Guardiola last lifted the European Cup as Barcelona coach.

That same year City began their Champions League journey, backed by the wealth of Abu Dhabi that has made them the dominant force in English football over the past decade.

Now in Guardiola’s sixth season, conquering Europe remains their holy grail.

There has been much frustration at the failures along the way, particularly when Guardiola has at times tried to be too clever by half.

But the sight of Madrid being put to the sword with the eyes of the world on the Etihad was why City have invested so much to bring the Spaniard to east Manchester and keep him around longer than he has stayed at any other club.

“There is not one complaint about the result, the performance,” added Guardiola. “I’m so proud and incredibly happy with the way we performed.” — AFP



Oman to take part in West Asian Beach Soccer Championship

WALEED ALJAHWARI
MUSCAT, APRIL 27

Oman Beach Soccer team clubbed in group A beside UAE, Kuwait and Lebanon teams at the West Asian Beach Soccer Championship which will be held in Saudi Arabia from 16 to 21 May 2022.

The draw of West Asian event took place on Monday in Amman city. The hosts Saudi Arabia led group B which featured also Bahrain and Palestine teams.

Each group will play the matches on the league system from one leg match. The first and second places will advance to semi-finals.

Then the winners from two matches will move to the final match and compete on the title.

The remaining teams that did not qualify for the semis will play to determine



the positions from fifth to seventh positions.

Oman will commence the campaign at the Championship against UAE on May 16 while Kuwait will face Lebanon in the same day.

The conclusion match of the opening day will be between Palestine and Saudi Arabia.

Parag, bowlers help Royals return to top IPL

PUNE, India: Riyan Parag's unbeaten 56 and inspired bowling helped Rajasthan Royals defend 144 against Royal Challengers Bangalore to go top of the IPL table on Tuesday.

The 20-year-old Parag smashed 30 off the last two overs to steer Royals, who won the inaugural IPL title in 2008 under late Australian great Shane Warne, to a competitive total before pace bowler Kuldeep Sen took 4-20 to complete a 29-run victory in Pune.

Ravichandran Ashwin returned figures of 3-17 after Sen dismissed skipper Faf du Plessis (23) and Glenn Maxwell (0) in successive deliveries to put Bangalore in trouble at 37-3.

Ashwin rattled the middle order with his off-spin and a dramatic run out of Dinesh Karthik, who departed for six after a mix-up with Shahbaz Ahmed, took the wheels off the chase.

Sen returned to wrap up the Bangalore innings as they were bowled out for 115 in 19.3 overs.

"The top order is a trick we need to fix," Du Plessis said after his team's second straight loss and batting failure following their 68 all out last week in the IPL.

"You need someone in the top four to bat through and we haven't done that consistently. We tried changing the batting lineup today and we feel that they can try playing positively, they can't go into a shell."

A struggling Virat Kohli opened the innings for Bangalore and avoided a third straight golden duck but nearly got caught on the third delivery, with the



ball falling short of the fielder at square leg.

Kohli, who has scored just 128 runs in nine matches, got off the mark on the fourth ball with a boundary and survived a few inside edges that missed the stumps but finally fell to Prasidh Krishna in the next over, for nine.

"Great players go through phases like this. We wanted him to get in straightaway so that he doesn't sit on the sidelines and think about the game," Du Plessis said of his team's star batter and

former captain.

"He is a great player and we still back him to turn it around and hopefully it's around the corner. It's a game of confidence."

Earlier, Bangalore's Josh Hazlewood removed the in-form Jos Buttler for eight to push Royals on the back foot after fellow quick Mohammed Siraj struck twice in his opening two overs.

Buttler, who has hit three centuries this IPL season and is the leading batter with 499 runs, mistimed a pull to mid-on where

Siraj took a stunning catch.

Skipper Sanju Samson attempted to hit back in his 21-ball 27 but was bowled by Sri Lankan leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga.

Hazlewood took 2-19 as Bangalore dried up the runs for Royals between overs 10 to 18, but Parag cut loose and survived a dropped catch on 32 to set up the team's sixth win of the season in eight matches.

Parag returned to the field to take four catches and named man of the match. — AFP

Thiem tumbles out in Estoril first round



ESTORIL, Portugal: Dominic Thiem suffered another first-round exit at the Estoril Open on Tuesday, losing in straight sets to France's Benjamin Bonzi as he continues his comeback from a long injury lay-off.

The Austrian former world number three lost 6-3, 7-6 (11/9) to the 58th-ranked Bonzi on the clay in Portugal.

Thiem, the 2020 US Open champion, was beaten in the first round of the Serbia Open last week in his first tour-level match in 10 months.

The 28-year-old had been sidelined with a wrist injury suffered in a grass court tournament in Marbella in June last year. He has fallen to 93 in the rankings. — AFP

Depleted Heat down Hawks, Morant sinks Wolves

MIAMI: Victor Oladipo led the depleted Miami Heat to a series-clinching 97-94 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Tuesday as Ja Morant produced a dazzling late scoring spree to give Memphis a thrilling win over Minnesota in the NBA playoffs.

Miami, missing injured stars Jimmy Butler and Kyle Lowry, produced a superb defensive performance to shut down Atlanta and advance to an Eastern Conference semi-final series against either Philadelphia or Toronto.

Oladipo, who only returned to action in March after an 11-month injury layoff, was handed his first start of the playoffs by Heat coach Erik Spoelstra.

The 29-year-old two-time All-Star repaid that faith with a 23-point display alongside Bam Adebayo, who finished with 20 points and 11 rebounds.

The win marked a fairytale return to centre stage for Oladipo, whose career has been decimated by injuries and surgeries over the past three years.

Oladipo was sidelined for nearly a year after undergoing surgery to repair a ruptured quadriceps tendon in May last year.

He had undergone surgery to treat the same problem in January 2019.

Morant magic sinks Wolves In the Western Conference playoffs Morant scored a gravi-



ty-defying last-gasp layup as the Grizzlies conjured an epic late fightback to stun the Minnesota Timberwolves 111-109.

Morant's wizardry with one second remaining sealed an enthralling battle which leaves Memphis 3-2 ahead in the best-of-seven series with game six in Minnesota on Friday.

Minnesota had led by 13 points early in the fourth quarter after big performances from Karl Anthony-Towns, who finished with 28 points and Anthony Edwards (22 points).

But Morant, who bagged 30 points, suddenly found his scoring touch to haul Memphis back into contention.

The 22-year-old rising star of the NBA erupted for 18 points in the fourth quarter as Memphis outscored Minnesota 37-24 in the final period.

The catalyst for Morant's masterpiece appeared to be a jaw-dropping dunk over Wolves guard Malik Beasley at the end of the third quarter that brought the

Memphis crowd to their feet.

Morant later said he was "not that excited" by the dunk, but added: "It definitely ignited the crowd and that gave us some energy."

The Grizzlies' come-from-behind win was too close for comfort for Morant though.

— AFP

Bahla end Seeb winning streak

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, APRIL 27

Seeb's four-match winning streak came to an end on Monday when Bahla stunned Omantel League leaders 3-2 in the 22nd week of the top-flight league.

Bahla's win delivered an advantage to the top teams including Al Nahda and Dhofar. Al Nahda benefited from Seeb's defeat as they jumped to second place with 45 points and reduced the gap to two points only after they edged Muscat 2-1 at Al Buraimi Sports Complex. Dhofar missed the opportunity after they were held to a draw by Sohar.

Against Bahla, the Muscat based team took the lead through top-scorer of Omantel League Mohsin al Ghassani in the 9th minute. The visitors bounced back with Mohammed al Shukaili scoring the equaliser in the 20th minute.

Then, Abdulsalam al Shukaili and Polo put Bahla two goals ahead with successive goals in the 37th and 55th minutes, before Eid al Farsi reduced the gap to one goal in the 68th minute.

The triumph did not change a lot in Bahla's position in the relegation zone at 12th position with 17 points. However, there are 12 points more in the forthcoming rounds and that may help Bahla to get away from the danger area. Bahla will meet Al Nasr, Dhofar, Muscat and Nizwa in the remaining four rounds.



AI NAHDA EDGE MUSCAT

Jordanian player Oday al Qura powered Al Nahda to a crucial 2-1 win over Muscat at Al Buraimi sports Complex. Coach Hamed al Azani's men managed to return to winning ways after their defeat in the previous week against Dhofar.

The victory took Al Nahda to second position in points table order at 45 points while Muscat remained at 18 points in the 10th position and suffered their fourth successive defeat. Any further losses may relegate the capital city team into the first division league.

Al Qura gave Al Nahda a second-minute lead, before he struck the second goal again later to make it 2-0. The consolation goal of Muscat club was netted by Mundher al Wahaibi.

Dhofar missed a golden opportunity to lessen the gap to one point as they dropped two points from their goalless draw against Sohar at the latter's home. The Salalah giants will meet Al Ittihad, Nizwa, Al Nasr and Seeb in the remaining weeks of the league.

In the other fixtures of week 22, Al Nasr edged Al Ittihad 2-1 to remain in fifth place while Saham received another shock as they suffered a 2-1 loss against Nizwa. The loss meant Saham are much closer to relegation into the first division league. The match between Oman club and Al Musannah ended in a goalless draw while Al Rustaq and Al Suwaiq's game finished at 1-1.

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Trial launch of RO 50m Shinas jetty project in Q4

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 27

A jetty being constructed at Khatmat Milaha in the Wilayat of Shinas to support the export of gabbro to Qatar is slated for trial operations in the fourth quarter of this year.

The project, valued at around RO 50 million, is the product of a cooperative agreement between the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology of the Sultanate of Oman and Qatar Primary Metals Company (QPMC), a Qatari state-owned procurer of gabbro and aggregate – primary materials for the construction and infrastructure sector.

Work on the project is around



80 per cent complete, the Ministry said in a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA).

At the heart of the project is a 1,800-metre-long jetty offering drafts of 8-12 metres that allow for the loading of gabbro directly on to ships or barges plying between Shinas and Qatar. The export capacity of the facility when fully operational is estimated at 7 million tonnes of gabbro annually.

Significantly, the Khatmat Milaha jetty project is the first port facility of its kind to be established outside the framework of commercial ports in the Sultanate of Oman, but will nevertheless play a important role in supporting maritime transport and logistics activities in the country.

FDI inflows rise 7.7pc to RO 17 billion

MUSCAT: The volume of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in the Sultanate of Oman grew by 7.7 per cent to reach RO 17.08 billion by the end of the fourth quarter of 2021, compared to RO 15.86 billion during the same period in 2020, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Inflows of FDI's by the end of Q4 2021 reached RO 1.22 billion.

The United Kingdom (UK) was in the lead with RO 7,873.4 million in investments by Q4 2021, followed by the United States with RO 2,220.9 million.

TURN TO PAGE 15



TANMIA GCC Diversified Equity Fund (TATHMEER)

Board of Directors Report For the Quarter ended March 31, 2022.

Dear Unitholders,

On behalf of the board, I am pleased to present the report for the quarter ended 31st March 2022 of TANMIA GCC Diversified Equity Fund (TATHMEER).

The Fund commenced the year on a positive note and posted a gain of 15.23%. The performance is consistent over the long term with an annualized 3 years returns of 16.83%. The fund has distributed cash dividends of 6% during the quarter. The Fund value in USD stood at 26.28mn and the Net Asset Value per unit stood at USD 1.423.

Performance

Period	TANMIA GCC Fund
Last 3 Months	15.23%
Full Year 2021	32.90%
Full Year 2020	2.56%
Full Year 2019	11.87%
Last 3 Years Annualized	16.83%

Global equity markets were mixed as they were continuously impacted by developments on the Russia-Ukraine conflict in addition to statements issued by the Fed on rate hikes. Oil prices were heavily impacted during the quarter as it reached a high of 139 USD per barrel on the back of the bans and sanctions on Russian commodities. GCC markets were major beneficiaries of the rise in oil prices and higher foreign inflow as trading volumes increased particularly with banking and petrochemical stocks.

All GCC markets ended the quarter with positive performances led by Abu Dhabi, which gained 17.2%. Qatar recorded a 16.4% return as the country is expected to have a bright year on the back of the upcoming FIFA 22 World Cup. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait All Shares gained 16.0% and 15.7% respectively, while Bahrain had a strong performance of 15.4%. Dubai appreciated by 10.3% and Oman closed the quarter up 1.8% to end a positive period for the region.

Unaudited Interim statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the quarter ended 31 March 2022 (Expressed in US Dollars)

	Quarter ended 31 March 2022 Unaudited	Year ended 31 Dec 2021 Audited	Quarter ended 31 March 2021 Unaudited
INCOME			
Dividend income on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	206,115	648,837	231,540
Realised gain on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	491,620	4,253,414	726,054
Unrealised (loss)/gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	3,016,981	2,568,874	1,619,813
Foreign exchange (loss)/gain	(10,756)	(46,075)	(5,039)
Finance & Other income	455	1,288	149
	<u>3,704,415</u>	<u>7,424,338</u>	<u>2,572,517</u>
EXPENSES			
Management and custodian fees	(111,460)	(427,121)	(95,778)
General and administration	(28,035)	(163,868)	(31,925)
	<u>(140,095)</u>	<u>(590,989)</u>	<u>(127,703)</u>
Net profit/(loss) for the period/year before taxation	<u>3,564,321</u>	<u>6,833,349</u>	<u>2,444,814</u>
Taxation	-	-	-
Net profit/(loss) for the period	<u><u>3,564,321</u></u>	<u><u>6,833,349</u></u>	<u><u>2,444,814</u></u>
Earnings per unit	<u>0.19</u>	<u>0.34</u>	<u>0.12</u>

Managed By:
Oman National Investment Development Company SAOC
P.O.Box 3028, Postal Code 112, Rovi, Sultanate of Oman, Tel +968 22 300 400 Fax +968 22 300 420
www.tanmia.om

Brief Summary of Accounts

Particulars	For the 3 Months ended 31 March 2022 (USD)	For the 3 Months ended 31 March 2021 (USD)
Revenue for the period	3,704,415	2,572,517
Total Comprehensive income/(loss) for the period	3,564,321	2,444,814
Net Asset Value	26,282,994	23,652,194
Fund Capital	18,476,036	21,087,680
Net Asset Value per unit	1.423	1.122

Outlook

The current oil prices are expected to be significantly favorable for GCC markets as national budgets are benefitting from surpluses versus the budgeted oil price. This can result in the revival of public spending and the continuation of essential infrastructure projects. The petrochemical and banking sectors, in particular, are beneficiaries of structural changes in the market in terms of extended oil prices as well as rate hikes suggested by the Fed. The anticipation of the global event FIFA 2022 World Cup is evident in Qatar's performance and is expected to continue to weigh on Qatar's performance as well as the GCC in general. Concerns remain in terms of stretched valuations and inflation, which was initially thought to be transitory only. We continue to monitor global developments that weigh in on GCC markets and we continue to believe that our strategy of stock selection and active fund management should yield positive and steady returns in the future.

On behalf of the members of the Board of Directors, I would like to acknowledge His Majesty, Haitham Bin Tarik, for his inspiring leadership and vision that will continue to lead us further on the path to greater prosperity and thank our valued unit holders for their continued support.

Rawan Ahmed Al Said
Chairperson

Unaudited Interim statement of financial position as at 31 March 2022 (Expressed in US Dollars)

	31 March 2022 Unaudited	31 December 2021 Audited	31 March 2021 Unaudited
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	24,928,369	21,349,666	23,158,132
Other receivables	1,023,864	2,058,167	1,195,341
Cash and cash equivalents	583,385	672,157	568,521
Total assets	<u>26,535,618</u>	<u>24,079,990</u>	<u>24,921,994</u>
UNIT HOLDERS' FUNDS			
Fund capital	18,476,036	18,476,036	21,087,680
Accumulated Profit	7,806,958	5,351,199	2,564,514
Total Unit holders' funds	<u>26,282,994</u>	<u>23,827,235</u>	<u>23,652,194</u>
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	141,164	144,129	1,174,022
Amount due to a related party	111,460	108,626	95,778
Total liabilities	<u>252,624</u>	<u>252,755</u>	<u>1,269,800</u>
Total unit holders' funds and liabilities	<u>26,535,618</u>	<u>24,079,990</u>	<u>24,921,994</u>
Net asset value per unit	<u>1.42</u>	<u>1.29</u>	<u>1.12</u>

Rawan Ahmed Al Said
Chairperson

Unaudited Interim statement of financial position as at 31 March 2022 (Expressed in Omani Rials)

	31 March 2022 Unaudited	31 December 2021 Audited	31 March 2021 Unaudited
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	7,185,590	6,064,160	5,603,242
Receivables	45,089	310,794	96,371
Cash and cash equivalents	226,775	391,954	261,824
Total assets	<u>7,457,454</u>	<u>6,766,908</u>	<u>5,961,437</u>
UNITHOLDERS' FUNDS			
Fund capital	5,453,881	5,408,300	5,402,466
Retained earnings	1,916,223	1,106,885	486,194
Total Unitholders' funds	<u>7,370,104</u>	<u>6,515,185</u>	<u>5,888,660</u>
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	44,021	35,208	40,291
Due to a related party	43,329	216,515	32,486
Total liabilities	<u>87,350</u>	<u>251,723</u>	<u>72,777</u>
TOTAL UNITHOLDERS' FUNDS AND LIABILITIES	<u>7,457,454</u>	<u>6,766,908</u>	<u>5,961,437</u>
Net asset value per unit	<u>1.351</u>	<u>1.205</u>	<u>1.090</u>

Managed By:
Oman National Investment Development Company SAOC
P.O.Box 3028, Postal Code 112, Rovi, Sultanate of Oman, Tel +968 22 300 400 Fax +968 22 300 420
www.tanmia.om

Interim unaudited statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the quarter ended 31 March 2022 (Expressed in Omani Rials)

	Quarter ended 31 March 2022 Unaudited	Quarter ended 31 March 2021 Unaudited
INCOME		
Dividend income from financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	70,941	67,414
Realised gain on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	148,125	94,317
Unrealised gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	947,433	449,603
Foreign exchange gain	424	2,235
	<u>1,166,923</u>	<u>613,569</u>
EXPENSES		
Management, performance, custodian and fund administration fees	(36,037)	(28,173)
General and administrative expenses	(62,325)	(11,398)
	<u>(98,362)</u>	<u>(39,571)</u>
Net profit for the period	<u>1,068,561</u>	<u>573,998</u>
Earnings per unit	<u>0.196</u>	<u>0.106</u>



Al Kawthar Islamic Shariah Compliant Fund

"Value added exposure to GCC Markets"

Board of Director Report For the Quarter ended March 31st, 2022.

Dear Unitholders,

On behalf of the board, I am pleased to present the results of Al Kawthar Fund (Shariah Compliant) for the Quarter ended March 31st, 2022.

The fund began the year on a positive note with a gain of 16.63%. The fund has given an annualized 3-year return of 16.52%, during the quarter the fund distributed cash dividends of 5%. The fund value at the end of the period was RO. 7.37mn and the Net Asset Value per unit stood at RO 1.351

Fund Performance

Period	Al Kawthar
Last 3 Months	16.63%
Full Year 2021	27.32%
Full Year 2020	5.49%
Full Year 2019	7.62%
Last 3 Years Annualized	16.52%

Global markets witnessed volatility and pressure during the quarter as developments on the Russia-Ukraine tensions continue to weigh on trading activity. Oil prices were directly impacted by the conflict and has hit a high of 139 USD per barrel and maintained above 100 USD since then. This was a major driver for GCC markets, which reacted positively to the strong rally in commodity prices as well as rate hike announcements from the Fed. Trading volumes continue to rise thanks to strong retail sentiment and rising foreign interest in 2022.

All GCC markets ended the quarter with positive performances led by Abu Dhabi, which gained 17.2%. Qatar recorded a 16.4% return as the country is expected to have a bright year on the back of the upcoming FIFA 22 World Cup. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait All Shares gained 16.0% and 15.7% respectively, while Bahrain had a strong performance of 15.4%. Dubai appreciated by 10.3% and Oman closed the quarter up 1.8% to end a positive period for the region.

Interim unaudited statement of financial position as at 31 March 2022 (Expressed in Omani Rials)

	31 March 2022 Unaudited	31 December 2021 Audited	31 March 2021 Unaudited
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	7,185,590	6,064,160	5,603,242
Receivables	45,089	310,794	96,371
Cash and cash equivalents	226,775	391,954	261,824
Total assets	<u>7,457,454</u>	<u>6,766,908</u>	<u>5,961,437</u>
UNITHOLDERS' FUNDS			
Fund capital	5,453,881	5,408,300	5,402,466
Retained earnings	1,916,223	1,106,885	486,194
Total Unitholders' funds	<u>7,370,104</u>	<u>6,515,185</u>	<u>5,888,660</u>
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	44,021	35,208	40,291
Due to a related party	43,329	216,515	32,486
Total liabilities	<u>87,350</u>	<u>251,723</u>	<u>72,777</u>
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Net asset value per unit	<u>1.351</u>	<u>1.205</u>	<u>1.090</u>

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P.O.Box 3028, Postal Code 112, Rovi, Sultanate of Oman, Tel +968 22 300 400 Fax +968 22 300 420
www.tanmia.om

Brief Summary of Accounts

Particulars	3 Months 31 MAR 2022 RO	3 Months 31 MAR 2021 RO
Revenues	1,166,924	613,569
Total Comprehensive Income	1,068,562	573,998
Net Asset Value	7,370,105	5,888,661
Fund Capital	5,453,880	5,402,466
NAV per unit	1.351	1.090

Outlook

Regional Markets are anticipated to stay elevated in line with expectations of oil maintaining the current prices. Economies are heading for budget surpluses as the oil prices exceed the respective budget estimates, which might result in the revival of public spending and large infrastructure projects. Certain sectors such as petrochemicals are anticipated to outperform expectations in the coming period as they remain the prime beneficiaries of the rise in oil prices. In addition, the banking sector is benefitting in interest rate hikes. Concerns remain in terms of stretched valuations and inflation, which was initially thought to be transitory only. We continue to monitor global developments that weigh in on GCC markets and we continue to believe that our strategy of stock selection and active fund management should yield positive and steady returns in the future.

On behalf of the members of the Board of Directors, I would like to acknowledge His Majesty, Haitham Bin Tarik, for his inspiring leadership and vision that will continue to lead us further on the path to greater prosperity and thank our valued unit holders for their continued support.

Rawan Ahmed Al Said
Chairperson

Interim unaudited statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the quarter ended 31 March 2022 (Expressed in Omani Rials)

	Quarter ended 31 March 2022 Unaudited	Quarter ended 31 March 2021 Unaudited
INCOME		
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	<u>(98,362)</u>	<u>(39,571)</u>
Net profit for the period	<u>1,068,561</u>	<u>573,998</u>
Earnings per unit	<u>0.196</u>	<u>0.106</u>

Ahlibank marks Ramadhan with CSR initiatives

MUSCAT: In harmony with the sharing and caring values that the holy month inspires, ahlibank initiated a new CSR drive to provide Ramadan supplies to several families in Muscat and in the wilayats where the bank's branches are located.

Boxes of Ramadan supplies — including everyday essentials — and Eid clothing were distributed to selected families, in collaboration with local charity organizations and with the involvement of the members of ahli cares volunteers team, who joined in the distribution venture to spread the values of sharing that the holy month instills in observers.

While a team from Al Seeb Charity assisted in the distribution of supplies to families in the Wilayat of Seeb, hampers of Eid clothes were distributed in partnership with charity organizations based in different wilayats.

As part of the Ramadan drive, the ahli cares team also undertook a visit to the Oncology Ward of Royal Hospital before the onset of Eid festivities. The visit – to the adult and children's ward - was organised and designed to spread cheer through personal Eid greetings and gifts for patients of all ages.



BankDhofar continues to offer inclusive solutions to customers

MUSCAT: In line with the Arab Financial Inclusion Day, which is celebrated on April 27 every year, BankDhofar has reaffirmed its commitment to provide a diverse range of financial services and inclusive solutions to larger segments of customers across the Sultanate of Oman, promoting financial literacy and supporting social and economic stability of the country.

Elaborating on the bank's inclusive drive, BankDhofar's CEO Abdulhakeem bin Omar al Ojaili (pictured) noted: "Financial inclusion is substantial to achieve financial stability for organizations, and it contributes to the economic and social growth of the nation through the provision of inclusive channels that preserve the rights of all



segments of society. We, at BankDhofar, reiterate our dedication to bring in customized financial options that meet the needs of different customer segments, be it institutions or individuals, and we work constantly to enhance the quality of services in the

financial sector." Financial inclusion provides an opportunity for all individuals and institutions in the community to obtain financial services and products that fulfil their needs through official and legitimate channels such as banks and licensed financial institutions. "We aim to provide banking offerings in a manner that protects consumer rights and gives them the opportunity to manage their money and invest their savings in secure and legal means. This comes in parallel with our commitment to create job opportunities and facilitate access to financial services for persons with disabilities." In order to secure further financial inclusion, BankDhofar

continuously works hand-in-hand with the banking sector regulators in the Sultanate, developing guidelines for effective practices and combating illegal financial practices. BankDhofar also observes the market to identify and analyse challenges in order to introduce suitable solutions that meet the requirements customers, investors, strategic partners and stakeholders. Additionally, promotions are frequently launched throughout the year to facilitate customers' access to these services. Moreover, awareness campaigns are often launched to enhance the culture of savings and funds management, along with providing advisory services to entrepreneurs and SMEs.

Lincoln Aviator now with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: Lincoln's luxury Aviator is now available with service 5 years / 100,000 kms, 1 year registration and 3M window tint. (Conditions apply. For details visit a Lincoln showroom.) The campaign is valid until May 18, 2022. The Lincoln Aviator is a three-row SUV with all-wheel drive capability. The standard twin-turbocharged 3.0-litre V6 engine is paired with a 10-speed SelectShift automatic transmission. Delivering an impressive 400 horsepower and 562 Nm of torque for effortless acceleration. Lincoln Drive Modes' five signature settings – Normal, Conserve, Excite, Slippery and Deep Conditions – allow owners to further customise their driving experience, while a 10.1-inch standard configurable LCD instrument cluster confirms their choices with beautiful, easy-to-read dynamic graphics and prompts. Aviator delivers a wealth of intuitive technologies



designed to assist the driver while enhancing the overall experience of the journey. Right from the start, the Air Glide Suspension with Dynamic Lower Entry automatically lowers the vehicle to "greet" the driver, adding a new level of sophistication to Lincoln's signature welcome lighting embrace. The convenience of this feature makes loading cargo easier as well. For better driving experiences,

the Aviator is also equipped with a technology that enables Aviator to "see" most potholes or uneven pavement and immediately make suspension adjustments to keep the ride as smooth as possible. Adaptive Suspension with Road Preview uses an advanced forward camera to constantly scan the road, seamlessly adjusting the suspension as needed. All Lincoln vehicles come standard with a suite of driver-

assist features known as Lincoln Co-Pilot360. Traffic Jam Assist helps guide the vehicle using adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go, lane centering and traffic sign recognition, adjusting speed based on the information obtained. Evasive Steer Assist offers assistance to the driver to help avoid a collision with a slower or stopped vehicle; it provides additional steering support when a collision cannot be avoided by braking alone. Reverse Brake Assist can help stop the vehicle while backing up if Aviator's integrated rear sensors and camera detect an obstacle at the rear. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co LLC. Please log on to www.lincolnoman.com, or www.facebook.com/lincolnoman or www.instagram.com/lincoln_oman for the latest news, test drive requests and the latest press releases.

Vodafone brings the joy of Eid to children



MUSCAT: Vodafone recently launched its "Together We Share the Joy" campaign to celebrate the upcoming occasion of Eid, together with children in hospitals across Oman. The initiative included a team from Vodafone visiting the hospitals and presenting gifts to children within the institutions. Commenting on the initiative, Lujaina al Kharusi, Head of Regulatory & Corporate Affairs at Vodafone, stated, "Building on the spirit of Eid, which is meant to spread joy and happiness, we believe that the celebration

would not be complete without putting a smile on a child's face. To fulfil this purpose, we decided to carry out this initiative by giving fun and educational gifts to children who were admitted to the hospitals and were unable to partake in the festivities with their families. Through our efforts, we hope to have played a role in a little way to bring the joy of Eid to them. We wish all the hospitalised children all a speedy recovery and good health so that they can spend the next occasion at their homes, together with their near and dear ones."

Bank Muscat continues to promote financial inclusion

MUSCAT: Over the course of the last four decades, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has been continuously endeavouring to provide banking services and products to all segments of the economy including individuals, Government institutions, Large Corporates and Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. In line with its commitment to improving financial inclusion across the Sultanate, Bank Muscat celebrated the Arab Financial Inclusion Day, which falls on April 27 every year. Large network and digital services In line with its customer-centric vision, Bank Muscat has been studying with great attention the needs of different customer segments and coming up with an expansion strategy that aims to provide banking services and financial inclusion across all parts

of the country. Today, the bank is proud to have the largest branch network of 174 branches spread across all governorates in Oman, offering customers easy banking accessibility close to their places of residence or work. The branch network is ably supported by the bank's large base of over 800 e-channel devices including ATMs, CDMs and statement printers. The bank also operates 4 mobile banking units and 5 ATMs/FFMs in remote areas of the country as well as during events like expos and festivals. It must be noted that Bank Muscat is one of the few banks in the entire GCC that operates mobile units to reach unbanked areas. Reflecting the latest technological trends in banking, Bank Muscat has also been launching new features and services on its digital channels too, including its state-of-the-art



and Omnichannel mBanking and Internet Banking, a state-of-the-art Contact Centre and its e-payment gateway on a continuous basis over the years. The recently-launched QR code scanning option is a very helpful option for the bank's merchant partners, especially small businesses, in accepting e-payments from their customers quickly and securely. The bank had earlier launched

its contactless payment system which enables quick and secure transactions at point of sale (PoS) terminals at merchant partners across the country. Transaction security and convenience are enhanced by ensuring that payments are directly credited into the business' account in real time without the need to handle physical cash and the inconvenience of maintaining small change for customers.

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Over the years, the bank has launched a number of critical products and services that enable it to reach out to different customer segments and address their various needs. In 2019, Bank Muscat launched the first ATM in Oman for visually-impaired persons at the premises of the Al Noor Association for the Blind. The bank continues to enhance financial inclusion amongst persons with disabilities by providing easy access at branches and training its employees to better serve its customers. It must also be noted that as many as 93 bank employees at select branches serving the maximum number of hearing-impaired and speech impaired persons have been trained in Arabic Sign Language in partnership with the Omani Association for the Hearing-

impaired to facilitate better communication and customer service. **Broadening financial inclusion** In line with its pioneering achievements in broadening financial inclusion, Bank Muscat is continuously launching several new products and services. Bank Muscat launched the Woqar Banking Package in 2020 after studying in great detail and understanding the needs of retirees who were earlier working in both government and private institutions. The bank also launched the Floosi account for youth in the 15-17 age group in the recent past in response to this age group's financial needs and raise awareness about the importance of learning personal finance skills. Going ahead, the bank will continue in its efforts to enhance financial inclusion in line with the strategic needs of the Sultanate's economy.



Asyad Group marks World Day for Safety and Health



Safety milestone: 27.5 million safe manhours and no work injuries for a full year

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 27

Asyad Group joins corporations and enterprises around the world in celebrating the annual World Day for Safety and Health at Work on April 28 this year focusing on enhancing social dialogue towards a positive culture of safety and health.

The day chosen by the International Labour Organization (ILO) promotes the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases, focusing this year on building a positive safety culture in workplaces which Asyad Group promotes in all its business units and joint ventures.

This culture has been key in delivering an outstanding performance over the last two years, ensuring well-being of Asyad employees, and dramatically reducing lost time injuries (LTIs) and minor incidents.

Asyad's QHSSE figures demonstrate the Group's success in creating a safe

and efficient operational environment throughout 2021 without a single LTI across its business units.

Group reports prove that the culture promoted by Asyad is not only inclusive, but also built on encouraging all employees to raise their concerns related to potential risks and hazards to safety.

According to the Executive Summary, Asyad Group managed to achieve a 0.31 Lost time injury frequency rate (LTIFR) outperforming its 2021 target of 0.45. Other positive indicators between February 2021 and February 2022 include zero occupational injuries across Asyad units, over 22.9 million manhours without incident in Asyad business units, and 4.6 million safe manhours in Asyad joint ventures.

This year's chosen theme of the World Day for Safety and Health at Work is "Let's Act together to build a positive safety and health culture"; and Asyad truly believes that cooperation is key in creating safe and healthy workplaces.

The Group will continue to promote and instill such culture in its own units and with its partners in line with the Sultanate of Oman Logistics Strategy (SOLS 2040) and Oman Vision 2040.

Oman committed to promoting and safeguarding youth innovations

DEVELOPING NATIONAL COMPETENCIES: World IP Day celebrations underscore role of youth in driving sustainable future

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, APRIL 27

The Sultanate of Oman observed The World Intellectual Property Day on Tuesday, April 26, with an official event held under the auspices of Qais bin Mohammed al Yousuf, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

This year's celebrations were held under the theme, 'Intellectual Property and Youth: Innovation for a Better Future', affirming the great potential of young people in innovating new solutions to challenges and moving towards a more sustainable future.

The event featured a presentation on the National Innovation Strategy, an overview of the Artificial Intelligence Competition, a working paper on community awareness, and a discussion on the importance of intellectual property. In addition, the winners of a 'Youth Video' contest were also announced on the occasion.

In his address, Eng Khaled al Hinai, Director of the National Intellectual Property Office at the Ministry, said: "The Ministry supports young people by facilitating and simplifying the procedures for registering their innovations and providing technical advice to innovators in everything related to their innovations and their protection at the national and international levels."

According to Dr Ali al



THE MINISTRY SUPPORTS YOUNG PEOPLE BY FACILITATING AND SIMPLIFYING THE PROCEDURES FOR REGISTERING THEIR INNOVATIONS AND PROVIDING TECHNICAL ADVICE TO INNOVATORS IN EVERYTHING RELATED TO THEIR INNOVATIONS AND THEIR PROTECTION AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.

Alawi, Chairman of the Omani Association for Intellectual Property, the Sultanate of Oman officially joined the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on September 25, 1996 following the promulgation of Royal Decree 74/1996.

The role of the Oman Intellectual Property Association, he said, is to spread awareness of the importance of intellectual property rights, work to enforce intellectual property rights, encourage talented people, practical research in intellectual property, create

national competencies in the field of intellectual property and exchange experiences and knowledge in various fields of intellectual property. The association currently hosts multiple experiences that crystallised at the beginning of the millennium in the field of innovation and intellectual property, he noted.

"The Society looks forward to communicating with international bodies and organisations and specialised international research centres to support their goals and achieve their aspirations. It hopes to achieve the objectives entrusted to it and create the pillars of knowledge for intellectual property and its protections for its active role in supporting industrial progress and increasing recorded innovations", Dr Al Alawi further stated.

Since its inception, the Association has participated in a number of various conferences and seminars at the local level, including a working paper about the Society

at the World Intellectual Property Day Forum on April 26, 2018 and the opening of the Summer School Symposium on Intellectual Property and Knowledge Transfer at Sultan Qaboos University in cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

The Association also participated in the Muscat International Book Fair for three consecutive sessions, where the Society laid the foundations for cooperation with public and private institutions and strengthened its close cooperation with civil society institutions.

It also signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation, where the Society looks forward to framing aspects of intellectual property in various scientific innovations in the Sultanate of Oman in the future perspective in cooperation with the relevant parties within the framework of the objectives of the future vision Oman 2020-2040.

FDI inflows rise 7.7pc to RO 17 billion

FROM PAGE 13

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) came third with RO 1,048.6 million, followed by Kuwait with RO 937.6 million, China by RO 862 million, Bahrain by RO 375 million and Qatar by RO 313 million. The oil and gas extraction sector accounted for the largest proportion of FDI during 2021, with a value of RO 11,833.9 million, constituting a rise by 15.08 per cent compared to the same period in 2020.

The financial intermediary sector came second with RO 1,446.5 million, comprising a drop by 1.81 per cent compared to the same period in 2020, followed by converting industries with RO 1,395.9 million and real estate sector by RO 1,147.3 million.

Other sectors came last with RO 1,256.9 million, comprising a decline by 4.71 per cent compared to the same period in 2020.

— ONA

Agri-tech solutions can address GCC food security challenges: Report

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 27

A new Covid-19 Response Report (CRR), produced by Oxford Business Group (OBG) in partnership with the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development (AOAD), highlights the investment opportunities emerging in agri-tech across the Gulf as GCC countries move collaboratively and individually to find sustainable solutions for their food security challenges.

Titled "Agri-tech & Food Security in the GCC", the report shines a spotlight on the wide-ranging strategies for agricultural innovation and food production taking shape across the region in an easy-to-navigate and accessible format that includes key data and infographics.

It provides details of the significant food security challenges that the region has long faced, such as water scarcity and a lack of arable soil — which have been exacerbated by climate change.

The report also considers the



added impact of disruptions to global supply chains caused by the pandemic and more recent Russian war on Ukraine, which has heightened the need for the region to continue investing in domestic production capacity and agri-tech solutions.

Against this backdrop, the report charts the strides made across the GCC before and during the pandemic to reduce imports by investing in supportive technology solutions, such as water management, with a specific focus on desalination. It notes that such steps have helped to create an attractive investment environment for regional and international businesses eyeing

opportunities in the sector.

With global food production contributing significantly to harmful emissions, the CRR considers the challenges industry players face as they strive to ensure that new agri-tech solutions can mitigate the effects of climate change and reduce future risks.

"Policymakers and business leaders in the GCC have long been collaborating effectively to address food security challenges", Jana Treeck, Managing Director, Middle East, said.

"With the global pandemic and climate change exacerbating challenges in international supply chains and local production, there is renewed appetite for

investments in innovative food production solutions. As a result, we expect to see continued growth in agri-tech start-up funding and M&A activity in food production in the years ahead."

The CRR includes several case studies charting the growth stories and development plans of key regional stakeholders in the agriculture sector and food production industry. It also looks in detail at the work being undertaken at the AOAD to support the development and enhancement of the 22 member states' agriculture sectors and promote coordination in matters relating to agriculture and food security.

Russia halts gas supplies to Poland, Bulgaria

MOSCOW: Russia's energy giant Gazprom said on Wednesday it had stopped all gas supplies to Poland and highly dependent Bulgaria after not receiving payment in roubles from the two EU members.

President Vladimir Putin last month said Russia will only accept payment for deliveries in its national currency, with buyers required to set up rouble accounts or have their taps turned off.

Gazprom said in a statement it notified Bulgaria's state-owned gas operator Bulgargaz and Poland's PGNiG gas firm about the "suspension of gas supplies from April 27 until payment is made" in rubles.

"Starting April 1, payments for gas need to be made using new bank details, about which the counterparts were informed in a timely manner," Gazprom said.

The energy giant also warned that if Bulgaria or Poland make an "unauthorised withdrawal" of Russian gas that is transiting to third countries, "supplies for transit will be reduced by this volume". — AFP

Wealth slump renders bank hype a little rich

Asian private banking is in danger of turning from a boon into a boondoggle. Some of the problems dragging down wealth-management earnings in the region for UBS and other Western banks may prove temporary, but China’s “common prosperity” agenda risks undermining the much-hyped opportunity. A recent hiring blitz looks harder to justify.

UBS’s first-quarter results on Tuesday show a bank that’s generally in rude health. The Swiss titan’s pre-tax profit surged by almost a fifth from the same three-month stretch a year earlier.

The figure for Asia-Pacific wealth management, however, fell 38% year-on-year to \$288 million. Like Credit Suisse, HSBC, Citigroup and others, UBS has made the business of managing money for rich Asians a key pillar of its growth plans.

The banks can argue it’s just a blip. Coronavirus shutdowns in China have knocked stock prices, pushing down the value of assets that UBS and its rivals manage, in turn hitting fees.

Market swoons knock confidence, making clients less likely to invest in exotic, high-margin funds or place lucrative structured trades.

Lower transaction-based income caused most of UBS’s 20% year-on-year revenue decline in the region, and wealthy clients also borrowed less money. The optimistic argument is that all of that will reverse if Covid-19 restrictions ease and confidence returns..

A longer-term problem is Chinese President Xi Jinping’s loosely defined programme to curb the “reckless expansion of capital”.

It’s harder to make money as a custodian of billionaire fortunes when Beijing is clamping down on them. UBS’s own analysts recently altered their estimates for the size of the total Chinese private-banking market in 2025, reflecting the uncertainty. Their new forecasts set a low end of 140 billion yuan (\$21 billion), down from 178 billion yuan.— **Reuters**

Market swoons knock confidence, making clients less likely to invest in exotic, high-margin funds or place lucrative structured trades.



EID BUSINESS

A young man works at a mackerel’s smoking facility in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, as the fish is set to be sold at markets in Gaza ahead of the Eid al-Fitr holiday. — AFP

Pros and cons of retirement life



HAIDER AL LAWATI
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The author is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for the CBO and OCCI.

Everyone agrees that retirement from work is an exciting time for many people after working for more than three or four decades.

In retirement, a person has freedom and ample time to pursue their personal interests, travel or write, while also enjoying various other comforts of life. But it is also a time of anxiety and challenge for some retirees, either because they lack many of the material and social privileges they were getting at work, or were accustomed to their daily work routine.

Retirement brings for some people financial, social and psychological problems since they experience a decline in their monthly incomes, as well as the social status they were enjoyed as employed professionals.

Oftentimes, they grumble that what they receive is insufficient to meet the requirements of daily life. Sometimes, their complaints prompt official institutions to examine their demands and approve an annual increase in their salaries to keep pace with annual inflation. This is what was

recently taken in the sisterly countries of Qatar to raise the salaries of retirees.

Some institutions also host retirees, who have specific types of expertise, to speak at various types of scientific, literary and art forums and conferences.

From time to time, countries provide benefits to retirees by reforming laws pertinent to these groups, while also encouraging certain sectors and private institutions to allocate incentives and benefits to them in the form of, for examples, discounts on treatment, travel, entertainment and other such services.

Yet, there are some sections of the retiree community who feel at risk of boredom or begin questioning their self-worth – developments that can lead to depression and other health problems due to this negative mindset.

The biggest challenge in retirement is simply defining oneself in terms of one’s roles, activities and what they do, while self-acceptance is one of the greatest gifts of retired life.

With retirement, the time a person

spends without work increases, and this sometimes leads to an imbalance, and how to use the time in a positive way and avoid tensions, and how to adapt to the new reality.

Some of them plan and make decisions to take advantage of whatever positive thing is available to them and their daily life.

There is a lot of research showing that people who deal best with retirement are those who remain active and engaged, either by pursuing an old hobby or starting a new one.

They also remain physically active, such as by walking or swimming regularly, and participating in volunteer and community work.

As for those who overwhelm themselves with feelings of loneliness and seclusion, they tend to suffer from several diseases, especially in old age which requires them to make an effort to stay connected with family members of children and grandchildren, communicate with friends, participate in activities, and work on their skills to stay productive.

Downside risks to global growth



STEPHEN S. ROACH

The author is a faculty member at Yale University

GLOBAL GROWTH IS NOW EXPECTED TO SETTLE COMFORTABLY INTO A 3.6% GROWTH TRAJECTORY OVER 2022-23, WHICH IS FRACTIONALLY ABOVE THE 3.4% AVERAGE SINCE 1980.

The predictable downward revision cycle for the global economic outlook has begun. That is the message from the semi-annual World Economic Outlook just released by the International Monetary Fund, which reinforces earlier revisions from several prominent private forecasting teams.

The revision, largely in response to the war in Ukraine, is a big one—a sharp reduction in world economic growth to 3.6% for 2022, fully 1.3 percentage points below the IMF’s global growth forecast of 4.9% made just six months earlier.

To its credit, the IMF warned that this was coming, with an interim downward revision of 0.5 percentage point previously released in January. Even so, in looking back over the past 15 years, this is the third-largest cut in the IMF’s regular six-month revision cycle.

In April 2009, as the global financial crisis (GFC) was unfolding, the IMF cut its global growth estimate for the year by 4.3 percentage points (taking its pre-crisis projection of 3% positive

growth down to an outright contraction of -1.3%). And, of course, as the Covid-19 pandemic erupted in early 2020, the IMF slashed its growth estimate for the year by 6.4 percentage points. In both of those earlier cases, the outside forecast reductions foretold sharp global recessions—in fact, the two worst recessions in modern history.

Yet, neither the IMF nor most other forecasters believe that the current shortfall in global growth will push the world into outright recession.

The latest World Economic Outlook calls for a perfect soft landing in the \$96 trillion global economy. Following the recent downward revision, global growth is now expected to settle comfortably into a 3.6% growth trajectory over 2022-23, which is fractionally above the 3.4% average since 1980. Landings don’t get much smoother than that.

But that could well be wishful thinking, for several reasons.

For starters, forecasters were overly optimistic in extrapolating the sugar high of 2021 into the future. The 6.1% surge of global growth in 2021 was the sharpest

rebound on record, according to IMF statistics dating back to 1980. But this followed the steepest plunge on record, a -3.1% collapse in 2020.

Just as Covid lockdowns brought the bulk of the global economy to a virtual standstill in early 2020, reopening, in conjunction with aggressive monetary and fiscal stimulus, produced the mother of all snapbacks.

Forecasters, as well as investors, extrapolate current trends into the future, so it is important to look through the extraordinary volatility of 2020-21 to get a clean read on which trend to extrapolate.

Over those two years, global GDP growth averaged just 1.5%, well below the official global recession threshold, widely thought to be around 2.5%. Needless to say, if world economic growth slows more toward that underlying trend than the soft-landing glide path, another global recession is hardly farfetched.

A second reason to doubt buoyant forecasts is that the China cushion has been deflated. China’s economy is currently growing well below the nearly 8% pace recorded from 2010-2019.

The latest IMF outlook puts average Chinese growth in 2022-23 at 4.75%, only a little more than half the post-GFC trend when strong Chinese growth was literally the only thing that prevented the world from relapsing into recession over the 2012-16 period. As was the case back then, global resilience without a more vigorous Chinese economy is highly unlikely.

That is the risk today. With China currently facing a trifecta of shocks—a new wave of Covid-19 lockdowns, the ongoing pressures of deleveraging (especially in its unstable property sector), and war-related collateral damage resulting from its ill-advised partnership with Russia—the world economy can no longer rely on China as a source of resilience.

That, of course, cuts both ways. If China deepens its commitment to Russia, it will share in the isolation of its “unlimited partner.” For a Chinese economy that remains deeply reliant on the rest of the world, that could prove to be President Xi Jinping’s greatest challenge.

Third, the downshift in the global growth cycle is being accompanied by a major upswing

in the global inflation and interest-rate cycles. The soft-landing crowd is dismissive of the consequences. As inflation surges to 40-year highs, there is loose talk of “peak inflation”—the fanciful idea that it is so bad now that it can only get better from here.

This superficial arithmetic argument misses the point. With the US Consumer Price Index surging by 8.5% in March, there is of course an excellent chance that this key barometer of inflation will be considerably lower by year end. But how much lower?

Low enough to rescue the US Federal Reserve from its most irresponsible monetary-policy gambit since the mid-1970s and early 1980s? Do not count on it. While the Fed is now talking tough, talk is cheap. So far, it has delivered only 25 basis points, or just 10%, of the some 250 basis points of cumulative tightening that financial markets are expecting over the next six months.

Even if the Fed moves as expected and boosts the federal funds rate to 2.5% by this November, the nominal policy rate is likely to be well below the inflation rate.

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5 attractions in Bahla for that perfect Eid getaway

Bahla may come as a surprise for first-time visitors. Located about 200 km away from Muscat and takes almost 2 hrs to reach by car, if you don't have any plans for the Eid yet and wanted to bring your family to a historical trip in one of Oman's beautiful places, Bahla is one of the must-stops you must make. Here are 5 attractions for you to explore.. **P20**

The Rock brings superheroes to CinemaCon as 'Elvis' returns to Vegas

DWAYNE "THE ROCK" JOHNSON topped a superhero-packed bill as Warner Bros presented its upcoming slate of blockbusters at CinemaCon on Tuesday, while Baz Luhrmann's "Elvis" graced the Las Vegas casino stage at the movie industry summit.

Johnson -- Hollywood's top-grossing actor -- appeared unannounced to promote his upcoming DC film "Black Adam" at the annual gathering, where Warner bosses also confirmed a sequel to Robert Pattinson's "The Batman" is on the way.

Further superhero sequels "Shazam! Fury of the Gods" and "Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom," as well as new standalone

film "The Flash," were also presented to movie theatre executives and managers, who gather each year at Caesars Palace casino to be courted by Hollywood's top studios and A-listers.

Johnson described his character in "Black Adam" as "the Dirty Harry of the superhero world," with ambiguous morals.

"Heroes don't kill people," says one villain in never-before-seen footage, to which Black Adam replies: "Well I do."

Warner and Johnson are banking on "Black Adam" -- out in October -- becoming a major draw for their DC superhero film universe, which has grossed billions without reaching the heights of the rival and

record-breaking Marvel films such as "Avengers: Endgame."

Johnson surprised attendees by pretending to speak from Hawaii via video, before suddenly appearing in the Caesars Palace ballroom.

- "THE ORIGINAL SUPERHERO" -

Beyond the superhero fare, which dominates modern megaplexes, Baz Luhrmann took the stage to discuss "Elvis."

Luhrmann called the film -- out in June, starring Austin Butler as Elvis Presley and Tom Hanks as his domineering manager -- as less a biopic and more the tale of "America in the 1950s, 60s and 70s."

"At the centre of culture, for the good, the bad and the ugly, is the figure Elvis Presley," said Luhrmann, describing the music icon as "the original superhero."

"What this movie is about is America in those three epochs: Elvis the rebel, Elvis the highest paid actor in Hollywood and Elvis the living legend, the icon, trapped in that



hotel not 10 minutes from here," he told the Las Vegas crowd.

Early footage was shown from "Wonka" -- starring Timothée Chalamet as Roald Dahl's chocolatier before he opened his factory -- and Olivia Wilde's "Don't Worry Darling," a twisty thriller inspired by mind-bending movies such as "The Truman Show" and "Inception," out in September.

- BOWIE AND BODY HORROR -

Earlier on Tuesday, an experimental new David Bowie documentary featuring never-before-seen footage and the late

music superstar's own narration was previewed by indie studio Neon.

"Moonage Daydream" will premiere at next month's glitzy Cannes film festival before hitting theatres in September. It is the first film to be approved by Bowie's estate, which gave director Brett Morgen access to thousands of hours of archives.

"Bowie cannot be defined. He can be experienced," said Morgen.

"We've crafted 'Moonage Daydream' to be a unique cinematic theatrical experience -- to offer audiences that which they can't get from a book or an article."

Neither biopic nor traditional documentary, the film blends Bowie's songs, concert clips, extensive fan footage and a series of surreal, trippy and abstract images.

Neon also previewed "Crimes of the Future" from David Cronenberg, the director of "Crash" and "The Fly," who pioneered the "body horror" genre.

The film starring Kristen Stewart, Viggo Mortenson and Lea Seydoux imagines a world in which humans are forced to speed up their evolution with grisly organ transplants and body modifications to survive their changing environment.

Cronenberg said the film, which will also premiere at Cannes, was "a difficult film maybe, an extreme film, an unusual film."

CinemaCon runs until Thursday. — **AFP**

QURAN

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A GUIDE FOR THE FAITHFUL

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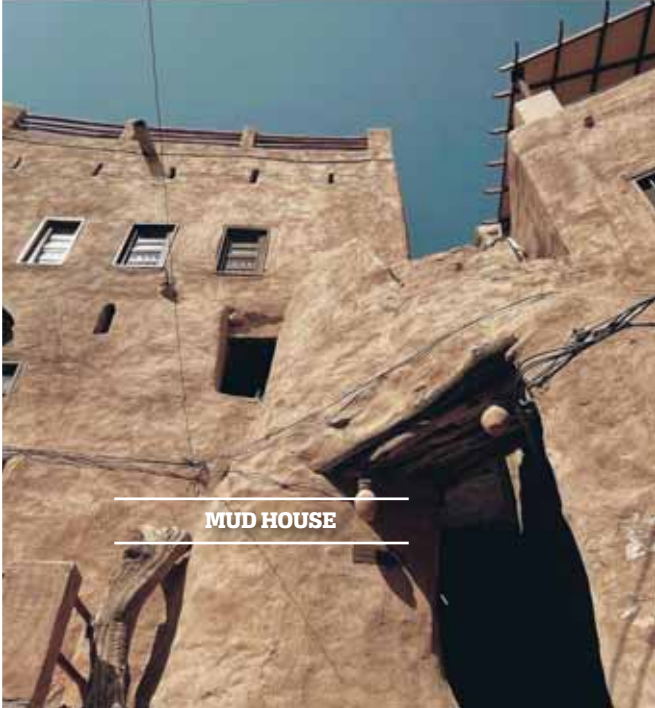


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AROUND THE WORLD

CHANGING WORLD

Earth's degraded land at 'breaking point', warns UN expert



DECADES OF UNSUSTAINABLE agriculture have depleted soils worldwide and accelerated both global warming and species loss, according to the UN official spearheading efforts to reverse land degradation.

Ibrahim Thiaw is the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), whose 197 parties -- 196 countries plus the European Union -- meet next month for the first time in three years, in Abidjan. Thiaw spoke to AFP about the crisis of deteriorating land quality, and how it is inextricably linked to climate change and biodiversity. The interview has been edited for length:

Q. INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR THREE DECADES BUT HAVE HAD FAR LESS ATTENTION THAN CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY. ARE THEY LESS IMPORTANT?

"No. Human beings live on land, but we also live off the land. We cannot take it for granted -- land is a finite resource that must be managed, not just exploited and mined. We have already reached a breaking point: there is no longer a balance between our needs and the capacity of the land to regenerate and produce."

Q. WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES?

"Two are especially critical. Droughts are hitting harder, and in more regions. No country is immune -- look at the western United States. But when they hit communities that are vulnerable, it's a major disaster. We see it now in the Horn of Africa, or last year in Madagascar. Droughts have always existed, but with climate change they are becoming more frequent and more severe." "The other critical issue is sustainable land management. If drought is a problem, land restoration is a solution. When you invest in land, you build resilience in your communities, and create opportunities to make land that would have otherwise been wasted or lost productive again. "Restoring land is also fighting against poverty, and irregular immigration. Many studies have established the link between land degradation and migration -- in Haiti, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Sahel and elsewhere. When people have no options, they flee, whether to the next country or further afield."

Q. HOW DOES LAND DEGRADATION AND RESTORATION INTERSECT WITH CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY?

"Land emits carbon when degraded. Restoring land to its natural state can help put that carbon back where it belongs. In Africa -- which emits only four per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions -- repairing the soil is one of the best options for mitigating emissions. The continent is not overpopulated but 65 per cent of land has been degraded in 70 years. "Biodiversity is more obvious: when you degrade land, you degrade ecosystems and destroy habitats. The reverse is also true. "Land, water, climate, biodiversity -- they are all thoroughly interconnected."

Q. THE LATEST GLOBAL LAND OUTLOOK REPORT CALLS FOR \$1.6 TRILLION IN INVESTMENT FOR LAND RESTORATION OVER THE NEXT EIGHT YEARS. LOOKING AT HOW HARD IT HAS BEEN TO MOBILISE FINANCE FOR CLIMATE ACTION, IS THAT A REALISTIC GOAL?

"For climate, we are talking about \$100 billion of mostly public money that should flow from developed to developing countries. Here we are talking about the private sector, which has an interest in conserving the soil because it is the foundation of their business.

"Then there are the harmful subsidies driving land degradation. If we repurpose just one-fifth of these subsidies to actually restore and protect land, we could fight against climate change and biodiversity loss at the same time." -- AFP

FASHION

Alexander Wang Returns to the Runway



DOZENS OF showgoers approached security personnel and black-clad staff with the same question: Would there be an after-party? But the answer, for one of the first times at a major Alexander Wang fashion show, was a resounding no.

It was one of many shifts for a brand that has remained remarkably and, at times, obstinately consistent in the 17 years the label has existed. After a three-year hiatus, Alexander Wang returned to the runways on Tuesday night with "Fortune City", which, the invitation promised, would be "a multilayered event and runway show celebrating Asian American culture, food and music."

It took place in Chinatown Central Plaza in Los Angeles, before 800 attendees, 500 of whom were members of the public who signed up for a spot via a general admissions link advertised on a billboard in Hollywood and on the label's social media.

A separate entrance and time to shop the night market was set aside for Wang's VIP guests, including reporters, editors and celebrities like designer Kimora Lee Simmons, K-pop star CL and model Behati Prinsloo Levine.

Far from the star-studded front row that used to make up his #WangSquad at previous shows, star in his campaigns and party with him on weekends, this was a small group of friends who could weather the backlash that comes with being seen at an event hosted by a designer whose reputation has suffered since 2021, when sexual misconduct allegations against him became public.

Early last year, 10 men, mostly anonymous and represented by the high-profile victims' rights lawyer Lisa Bloom, accused Wang of sexual assault during parties.

was once central to Wang's identity, his creative muse and the marketing superpower of the designer and his business -- and what threatens to kneecap a lucrative company.

The collection, instead, seemed to be anchored in his Chinese heritage. Attendees received Alexander Wang-branded vouchers that they were able to spend at the stalls of local Chinese vendors who offered meat skewers, dragon's beard candy and bingtanghulu (candied hawthorne fruit, reportedly a nostalgic hit with the Chinese models backstage). There were limited-edition T-shirts for sale with all proceeds going to the Los Angeles Chinatown Corp, whose mission is to preserve and increase the value of Central Plaza.

Until recently, Wang's identity as Chinese American was rarely mentioned. He ignored attempts by reporters and critics to connect his designs with his identity as a child of Taiwanese immigrants, even as he was frequently compared to Asian American peers like Phillip Lim and Prabal Gurung, who have long described their ethnic backgrounds as a relevant to their design choices.

Even so, Wang's background has been well documented. His parents are first-generation immigrants and ran a successful manufacturing business in San Francisco. His friends, along with his clientele, were "It" girls, models, former boarding-school rich kids and the ethnically diverse, largely queer community of party people who wanted their clothes to express the simple fact that they were out last night.

Wang's laser focus paid off. Sales reached more than \$100 million at one point, according to Business of Fashion.

But the brand began to lose relevance soon afterward. In 2019, Wang attempted a rebrand for the label that included a new logo and a commitment to telling his American story through a first-generation immigrant's lens, which was inspired by what his parents had only recently told him about what it was like to come to America in the 1970s.

"I had never asked them before", Wang, who was 35 at the time, told 'The New York Times' in 2018.

But among the Asian American attendees, many chalked up the late-blooming consciousness to more personal reasons: "There was a lot of people in our community that did not want to associate themselves too much with the Asian experience", said May Lee, 56, who is involved in a variety of local Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, or AAPI, organisations and attended the event to show support to Asian American designers. "Don't make noise, don't make waves, fit in."

"I don't want to blame Alexander Wang, but I think he is an example of that type of Asian going through that type of experience", she continued. "I say better late than never." -- NYT

A PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE



Dr Yousuf Ali al Mulla

Kindness changes minds!

AS THE WORLD becomes more digital, we all noticed how many people are arguing through social media. These misunderstandings and arguments, for some, eventually end in personal grudges. What is the use of arguing with someone who disagrees with you? You might want them to change their minds, but it's easier said than done! Changing minds, especially changing beliefs that are strongly linked to people's identity, for instance, is very difficult!

Hence, the way people tend to argue today especially online, makes things worse. Disagreements can feel like a war in which fighters dig trenches on either side of any topic and shoot their thoughts back and forth like grenades. So you wouldn't blame anyone involved because they feel like they're under fire and no one is likely to change their mind when they're attacked!

However, even these kinds of battles may give everyone involved some satisfaction in the short term. He/she thinks they deserve it because he/she is right and they are bad! Neither camp indeed has any effect on the other. On the contrary, I firmly believe that if you want an opportunity to change minds or ideas, you need a new strategy: stop using your values as a weapon and start giving them as a gift.

Especially when people fail to live up to your moral values (or expressions of them), it is easy to conclude that they are immoral. Moreover, if you are too attached to your values, you may feel that this difference is a threat to your identity, leading you to attack, which will not convince anyone who disagrees with you. Aren't you with me that if you insult someone in a disagreement, probably he

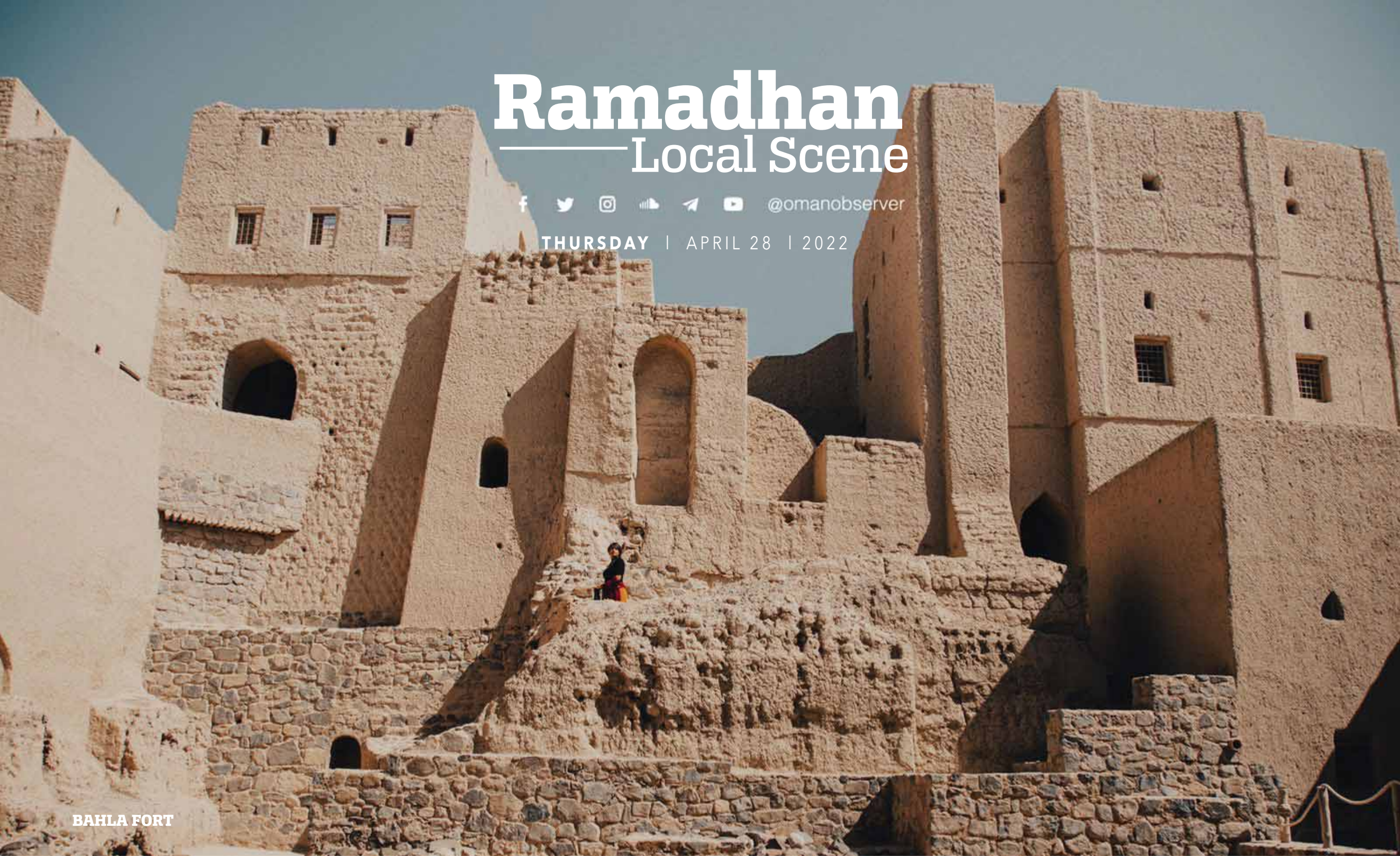
will strengthen his position against you!

As such, solving this problem requires changing the way we see and present our values or ideas. What I mean here is that if we want any chance of persuasion, we must happily present it. Argument and intolerance is an ugly thing, it is designed for coercion and hatred. Whereas the style of a gift is something we think is useful to the recipient, who we hope will accept it voluntarily and do so with gratitude. This frankly requires that we present it with love, not with insults and hate.

So there are steps for instance to make this easier: like bringing someone who is arguing with you into your circle to hear your views, as long as doing so does not invite offence. Also, do not always take rejection personally. Furthermore, I would think here that the most important step, especially when it comes to changing someone's belief, is that listening is more powerful than speaking. Listening, of course, is a gift in itself and you might even say: If someone is verbally abusing you, the best course of action is not to engage at all.

In the end, if a person truly believes in himself and that he has much good for people, then he must not fall prey to the arrogance of perfect knowledge and must be willing to open up new and better ways to serve his purpose and the people around him. Many followers on social media share your opinions, but the generosity and openness of those around you is undoubtedly a greater opportunity to make people better and closer in the long run.

Dr Yousuf Ali Al Mulla is a physician, medical innovator and a writer.



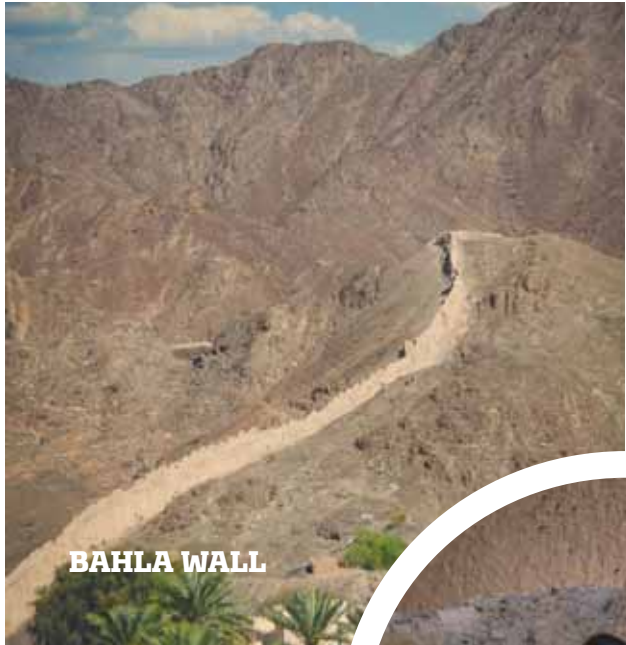
Ramadhan

Local Scene

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THURSDAY | APRIL 28 | 2022

BAHLA FORT



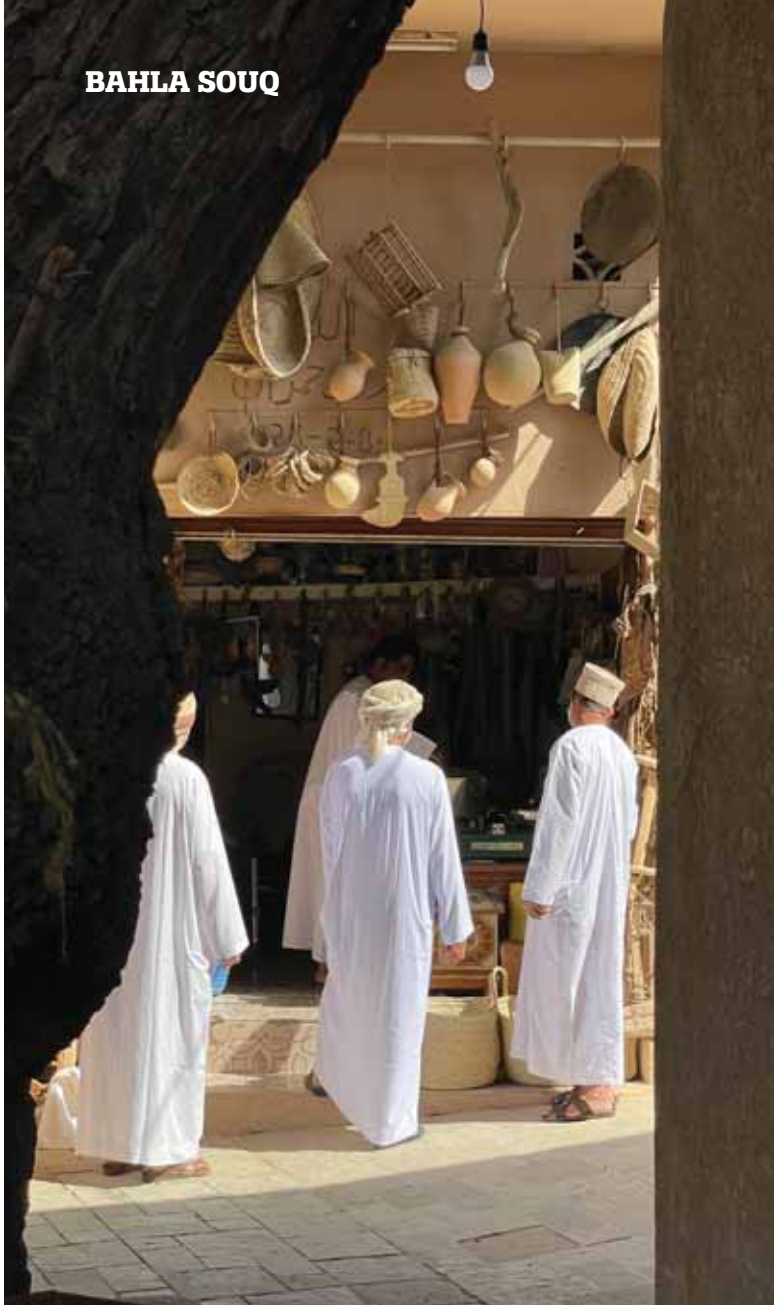
BAHLA WALL



KADM CAFE



POTTERY FACTORY



BAHLA SOUQ

5 attractions in Bahla for that perfect Eid getaway

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A trip to Bahla is an informative journey to understanding history, an exploration of authentic culture and heritage and a fascinating inside look into the local lifestyle and way of living.

Bahla is situated in Al Dhakiliyah, about 200 km away from Muscat and takes almost 2 hrs to reach by car. If

you're looking for an amazing getaway that blends culture, history and fascinating daily scenes, this is one of the must stop you must make during this long Eid holiday.

If you're only planning for a day trip, it is highly advisable to leave Muscat at around 7:00 in the morning to fully explore the attractions highlighted below. Remember that Bahla is one of those destinations that is ripe with details and therefore must need a curious mind to fully enjoy the destination.

BAHLA POTTERY FACTORY

The pottery industry of Bahla has

been very popular since ancient times. Some of the best practices in pottery making are still being used to this day, in fact, it is believed that the Bahla pottery making method is very different from all other pottery-making processes in Oman. The factory is easy to find on Google map and once in the area, you have to cross some narrow lanes passing through old Omani houses some of which are decorated with bougainvilleas. Once inside, the factory is divided into different segments which include areas like the moulding section, the decorating section, and the colouring/painting section among others.

One of the most exciting parts of a visit here is an opportunity to try making pots yourself which needed to be booked or arranged in advance. They usually do hands-on pottery making classes on a first-come-first-served basis. The pottery factory is open from 7-12 noon & 5-8 pm and you can contact them via their Instagram: @adawipottery.

BAHLA SOUQ

On Fridays, the souq will be filled with locals which is proof that to this day, it remains to be one of the most important gathering points among the villagers. Souqs in Oman are strategically located next to forts as in history, this was the best way for authorities to monitor events, personalities and issues. While big supermarkets are popping up across Oman, many Omani families prefer to purchase their home needs on souqs as they trust the authenticity of items sold in these traditional places. In Bahla souq, elderly gentlemen still love to gather under the nearly 300-year-old tree

sharing kahwa with their friends and acquaintances. Because of the recent renovations, Bahla souq is one of the well-maintained souqs with proper goods segregation system. The souq is the best place to buy quality honey, khanjar and other pottery items. It also has a lively livestock auction market that usually begins at 6 in the morning on Fridays.

KADAM CAFE

One amazing attraction inside Bahla souq is Kadam Cafe which has started to create social media buzz not just for its fine artisanal coffee but also because of its themed majlis areas which allow guests to take a tour around the world. The majlis included themes like Arabian and Greek, among many others. Traditional souqs in Oman have been seeing a rise in these artisanal coffee shops and the notable thing about Kadam is that it perfectly blends with the aesthetic of the whole souq. A good move to attract the younger generations, the souq is therefore navigating towards a road of relevance for modern living. What attracts many to this coffee shop is that it offers an amazing view of the nearby Bahla fort.

BAHLA FORT

This is one of the historic fortresses in the country and the only fort which is listed on the Unesco World Heritage List. This fort is massive in size and has multiple towers, mosques and wells. The oldest part is the fort is called Al Qabasah which is a collection of five-story rooms. A visit to this fort will take nearly 2-3 hours. From the fort, the old mud houses and the old village is visible. Bahla fort

went through a massive renovation and was reopened in 2012. Behind the fort is also a beautiful mosque that overlooks the nearby garden and offers a stunning view of the eroding Great Wall of Bahla. Both Bahla Fort and the mosque behind it offer great photo opportunities.

BAHLA WALL

Some modern observers credit the construction of the Great Wall of Bahla as a way to deter Persian occupation in the region. Local stories also said that horses can run on top of the wall as it was wide enough for horse riders. Nearly 12 km in length, the wall protects oasis and palm trees that can still be seen today. While some portions of the wall are still in bad shape due to erosion, efforts to renovate and preserve can be noted in some areas. If you're making a stop in Bahla, the wall is visible from the Bahla Fort but the experience won't be complete if you are unable to walk through the ancient wall path. During the summer and without any protection from the sun, walking around or on top of the wall might be challenging and exhausting. Make sure to consider your health before taking any steps further but if you are willing to take an afternoon hike, it can be a fascinating trip through history.

Overall, Bahla may come as a surprise for first-time visitors. As advised, make sure to carry hats and sunglasses if you're planning a day tour in the area. Lunch is served at the nearby food joints surrounding the souq. If you don't have any plans for the Eid yet and wanted to bring your family to a historical trip in one of Oman's beautiful places, this is a place you must add to your list.