

REGION AT A PERILOUS CROSSROADS AS MILITARY OPERATIONS ESCALATE: SAYYID BADR

STRIKES AGAINST REGIONAL STATES UNACCEPTABLE



Smoke rises from a high-rise building following a drone attack in Kuwait City on Sunday. — AFP

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN on Sunday participated in the extraordinary ministerial session of the Council of the Arab League, convened via videoconference to address escalating regional developments in the wake of the ongoing Israeli-American military campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran, and its grave implications for regional security and stability.

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, headed the Sultanate of Oman's delegation and delivered a comprehensive address articulating Oman's principled position on the escalating crisis.

In his statement, the minister affirmed that the region stands at a perilous crossroads as military operations escalate and the logic of force increasingly supplants the language of dialogue and peace. He underscored the profound political, economic and security repercussions of this unlawful war, which collectively threaten regional stability and endanger the safety of its populations.

He observed that the Israeli-American attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran were launched at a critical juncture when negotiations were demonstrating tangible progress along the diplomatic path towards a just and honourable resolution.

The minister further noted that the Iranian response, which included strikes against sites in several regional states, constitutes an unacceptable infringement upon the sovereignty of these nations. He affirmed that the populations of Arab and Islamic states deserve to live in security and peace and must not be drawn into a war that is not theirs, reiterating the Sultanate of Oman's full solidarity with sisterly countries in the measures they undertake to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

TURN TO P2

ARAB LEAGUE SAYS IRAN'S ATTACKS ON MEMBER STATES RECKLESS

ATTACKS INFRINGEMENT ON SOVEREIGNTY OF GCC NATIONS

ARAB AND ISLAMIC STATES DESERVE TO LIVE IN PEACE

REGION SHOULD NOT BE DRAWN INTO A WAR THAT IS NOT THEIRS

CONSENSUS REACHED ON IRAN'S NEXT SUPREME LEADER

UK'S STARMER AND TRUMP HOLD CALL ABOUT IRAN WAR

POPE LEO URGES END TO BOMBING, CALLS FOR DIALOGUE

US PRESSES SRI LANKA NOT TO REPATRIATE IRANIAN CREW

TWO KUWAITI FIRE OFFICERS KILLED WHILE PERFORMING DUTIES

US SAYS IT WILL NOT HIT IRAN ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

HM, LEADERS DISCUSS EFFORTS TO ADVANCE DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received separate telephone calls on Sunday from King Felipe VI of Spain and King Philippe Léopold Louis Marie of the Belgians. The telephone conversations exchanged perspectives on the evolving military escalation in the region and its far-reaching implications for the security and stability of nations. Emphasis was laid on the imperative of unifying regional and international efforts and advancing diplomatic solutions to bring an end to the escalation.

MORE CITIZENS RETURN TO OMAN

In light of current regional developments, the Foreign Ministry, in coordination with relevant authorities in the Sultanate of Oman, has continued implementing the necessary arrangements to facilitate the return of Omani citizens currently abroad. In this context, an additional group of citizens arrived in Oman on Sunday following their facilitated transit from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Additional groups of citizens arriving from GCC countries returned safely via land border crossings. The Foreign Ministry reaffirmed the continuation of its efforts to facilitate the return of citizens in successive stages, ensuring their security and well-being.

INBRIEF

ROYAL DECREE RATIFIES AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Sunday issued Royal Decree No (42/2026) on the ratification of Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Republic of Zambia, signed in Punta Cana on November 11, 2025. Article (1) ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree. Article (2) states that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — ONA

MUSCAT INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR POSTPONED

Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information and Chairman of the Main Committee of the Muscat International Book Fair, has announced the postponement of the fair's 30th edition, originally scheduled to convene from March 26 to April 5. The event will now be held at a later date to be announced in due course. The minister affirmed that the Main Committee attaches paramount importance to hosting the exhibition under exemplary organisational and logistical frameworks that guarantee the success of the fair.

Oman marks International Women's Day

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman joined the world's countries to mark International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8 every year. This year's theme, 'Rights, Justice, Action for All Women and Girls,' highlights women's rights and raises awareness of their issues.

The Sultanate of Oman attaches great importance to women, considering them active partners in development and nation-building. Women enjoy the support of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the country benefits from their energies and



The total number of Omani women working in the public and private sectors reached 270,696 in 2025.

competencies in various fields. Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI)

show that the total number of Omani women working in the public and private sectors reached 270,696 in 2025. Of these, 107,212 work in the government sector, while 163,484 are employed by the private, family and non-profit sectors, reflecting the growing presence of Omani women in the labour market and their contribution to various fields of development.

The Sultanate of Oman signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by Royal Decree No 42/2005. — ONA

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SHORT TAKES



انتخابات أعضاء
المجالس البلدية
للفترة الرابعة ٢٠٢٦

Elections are scheduled from April 5 to 23.

Timeline set for
Municipal Council
election applications

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Interior issued a decision specifying the timeframe for submitting candidacy applications for the Fourth Term Municipal Council elections, scheduled to take place from Sunday, April 5, until Thursday, April 23, 2026. Additionally, the decision stipulated that the final deadline for withdrawing any submitted candidacy applications will be Thursday, October 29, 2026.

The ministry has extended an invitation to eligible individuals who meet the required criteria for Municipal Council membership to submit their applications via the official election website at [elections.om](#). Interested candidates must complete the prescribed electronic form. — ONA

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RAMADHAN
1447 AH
MONDAY
MAR 9, 2026



PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR
05:07 AM

DHUHR
12:23 PM

ASR
03:46 PM

MAGHRIB
06:18 PM

ISHA
07:28 PM

omanobserver.om

f x s i



CALL FOR JOINT ARAB ACTION TO END REGIONAL WAR

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, held a meeting on Sunday with several ambassadors of Arab countries to the Sultanate of Oman. These meetings are a continuation of the discussions conducted by the Foreign Minister over the past few days to review regional developments in light of the Israeli-US war on the Islamic Republic of Iran and its harmful effects on the interests of

all countries in the region. During the meeting, the Foreign Minister explained the Sultanate of Oman's perspective, which calls for the necessity of joint Arab action and the exercise of political and diplomatic pressure to stop this war and contain its repercussions. He emphasised that these efforts are vital for safeguarding the supreme interests of the region and the safety of its peoples. — ONA

Measures on to stabilise
essential goods prices

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

AUTHORITIES IN Oman have put multi-layered efforts in place to ensure the smooth flow of essential goods at reasonable prices, the Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) said, as it continues to closely monitor the markets.

Oman has kept the Dhofar border open for free commercial goods movement, and the government has assured traders of full support to procure and store goods, protecting consumers from undue price hikes.

“No undue price hike will be tolerated, and any increase in prices of essentials must be validated by the authority,” a CPA source said.

“We caught some shops breaching the reasonable price rules and took action. We have an ample supply of all goods, and warnings have been issued to all commercial outlets,” the source added.

Abdul Vahid, Managing Director of Suhol Al Fayha, Oman's largest importer and exporter of fresh fruits and vegetables, said that with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and the CPA, prices remain largely under control despite minor fluctuations.

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Prices remain largely under control despite minor fluctuations.

“Although prices fluctuate occasionally due to limited availability from Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, we are committed to keeping them stable, thanks to government support,” he added.

In a recent meeting with traders, importers and suppliers, ministry representatives assured the availability of Asyad, Oman's leading integrated logistics provider, to source products without additional charges. To address current shortages of fruits and vegetables,

Oman has banned exports of local crops. Violators will face legal action, according to the CPA. Plans are also underway to charter flights to bring in essential goods to maintain price stability.

The recent price increases were attributed to war surcharges imposed by some companies, which have caused variations in the market. The situation comes amid high demand for fruits and vegetables during Ramadhan, compounded by the geopolitical disruptions affecting imports.

Arab and Islamic states deserve to live in security and peace

FROM PAGE 1

Sayyid Badr emphasised that rhetoric and confining responses to formal statements of denunciation and condemnation remain fundamentally insufficient to address the deepening crisis or halt the advance of war. He affirmed that the most effective path lies in unwavering adherence to principle, action animated by a spirit of shared responsibility to protect the region's supreme interests through intensified political and diplomatic engagement, and the exercise of sustained pressure.

He called for an immediate return to dialogue and diplomacy to address the root causes of the conflict, stressing the imperative of expressing the language of truth and anchoring Arab positions in universal human values and

principles when confronting injustice and aggression, regardless of its source — even when emanating from a friendly or allied party.

The minister highlighted the critical importance of building upon recent statements by the Iranian President regarding de-escalation with neighbouring states and his proposal for immediate negotiations to conclude a binding non-aggression agreement among regional states, thereby contributing to sparing the region from being drawn further into the vortex of conflict.

He stressed the necessity of utilising all available diplomatic channels to persuade the United States and Israel that addressing international concerns pertaining to Iran can only be achieved through dialogue and diplomacy. He issued a stark warning that the continuation of hostilities would carry grave and



A photographer takes pictures as smoke rises after a strike on Shahrar fuel tanks in Tehran, Iran, on Sunday. — Reuters

far-reaching implications for regional security and stability, in addition to its deleterious impacts on maritime navigation, global supply lines and the global economy.

Sayyid Badr concluded by reaffirming that priority must be concentrated on intensifying diplomatic and political efforts to secure a peaceful resolution addressing the root causes of this conflict, in a manner that preserves regional security and stability and spares its populations the devastating ravages of war.

HARMFUL EFFECTS Earlier, Sayyid Badr held a meeting with several ambassadors of Arab countries in the Sultanate of Oman.

These meetings are a continuation of the discussions conducted by the foreign minister over the past few days to review regional

developments in light of the Israeli-US war on Iran, and its harmful effects on the interests of all countries in the region.

During the meeting, the foreign minister explained the Sultanate of Oman's perspective, which calls for the necessity of joint Arab action and the exercise of political and diplomatic pressure to stop this war and contain its repercussions. He emphasised that these efforts are vital for safeguarding the supreme interests of the region and the safety of its peoples. The meeting was attended by Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al Hinai, Ambassador-at-Large at the Foreign Ministry; Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs; and Shaikh Faisal bin Omar al Marhoon, Head of the Arab Department at the Foreign Ministry. — ONA



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MOH 354/18/13/2025

SHORT TAKES

The initiative will bring opportunities to share knowledge and build networks.

TechWoman launched to empower women in technology

MUSCAT: In celebration of International Women’s Day, Tech Oman has launched TechWoman, a new initiative dedicated to encouraging, supporting and highlighting the role of women in the technology sector.

The initiative aims to create a dynamic platform for women by organising events, seminars, workshops and meetups designed to empower women in technology.

Through TechWoman, Tech Oman seeks to inspire more women to pursue careers in the tech field while supporting those already in it to grow, connect and lead.

“Technology thrives on diversity of ideas and perspectives. With the launch of TechWoman, we aim to create a platform that encourages more women to participate, lead and innovate in the technology sector. By providing opportunities for engagement, learning and collaboration, we hope to inspire the next generation of women technologists and contribute to a stronger and more inclusive technology community in Oman,” said Tariq al Barwani, President of Tech Oman.

Royal Hospital secures ACI’s platinum accreditation for quality care

MUSCAT: The Royal Hospital has secured the platinum level of accreditation from Accreditation Canada International (ACI) for the second consecutive time, a significant achievement that reflects the hospital’s commitment to implementing the highest standards of quality and patient safety in accordance with global best practices.

The hospital achieved the gold level of accreditation in 2016 and 2019, and the platinum level in 2023, and is now repeating its achievement for the second consecutive time, confirming the sustainability of its institutional performance and the progress of its clinical and administrative operations.

This positive evaluation followed a comprehensive evaluation process covering criteria such as clinical governance, risk management, patient safety, leadership effectiveness, continuity of care, continuous improvement, performance indicators, patient experience, integration of medical specialties and adherence to evidence-based standards.

Dr Amed bin Khamis al Araiimi, Director-General of the Royal Hospital, said that this achievement is the result of the combined efforts of all

DR SUAD BINT SALEEM AL ISMAILI

medical, nursing, technical and administrative staff, adding that a culture of quality has become an integral part of daily practice in the hospital.

He noted that renewing the platinum accreditation confirms that excellence is a sustainable institutional approach and that patient safety and the quality of healthcare are strategic priorities in all our clinical and operational processes.

He added that this achievement reflects the Royal Hospital’s ability to keep pace with international standards and enhances community confidence in the specialised and referral

services it provides.

He pointed out that the hospital continues to develop its digital infrastructure, enhance the efficiency of its medical supply chains, improve the readiness of its specialised teams and expand its training and professional accreditation programmes, all of which support the sustainability of its performance and keep pace with the rapid transformations in the healthcare sector.

Dr Suad bint Saleem al Ismaili, Senior Consultant in Paediatric Intensive Care and Director of the Quality and Patient Safety Department at the Royal Hospital, said that the accreditation came after thorough field reviews and evaluation meetings that included various departments and services.

She said that achieving the platinum level reflects the effectiveness of the quality and patient safety system, the hospital’s success in implementing evidence-based policies and procedures, promoting a culture of incident reporting and analysis, proactive risk management, and engaging patients and their families as partners. She added that maintaining this level requires continued investment in digital transformation. — ONA

Farmers alerted as survey tracks Dubas palm pest

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
SUR, MARCH 8

SPECIALISTS from the Directorate-General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Sur have carried out field visits to several agricultural villages, including Wadi Bani Jaber and Wadi Al Manqal, to monitor the spread of the Dubas palm pest and assess its current generation for 2026.

The inspections focused on date palm trees across farms to identify developmental stages of the pest in preparation for targeted control measures during the upcoming agricultural cycle.

The initiative is part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources’ regular programme to track pests that may impact crop productivity and the quality of date harvests.

Date palms remain one of Oman’s most significant crops, forming a cornerstone of rural livelihoods and traditional farming systems in many wilayats, including Sur.

During the visits, specialists examined fronds and other plant parts to detect signs of infestation, paying close attention to eggs, nymphs, adult insects, and sugary secretions, which can foster sooty mold and affect tree health.

Officials highlighted that early monitoring is crucial to limiting the spread of Dubas infestations. Identifying the dominant

Specialists examined fronds and plant parts and detected signs of infestation during their visit.

stage of the pest allows specialists to time interventions effectively, whether through agricultural practices, biological control, or approved chemical treatments.

The visits also included awareness guidance for farmers, stressing regular farm monitoring, proper palm management such as pruning and cleaning, and the early reporting of infestations to enable timely intervention by technical teams.

The annual Dubas palm pest programme

involves field surveys, assessment of infestation levels, and mapping affected areas to guide targeted control campaigns. The ministry continues to enhance monitoring through staff training and modern pest assessment methods to safeguard Oman’s agricultural resources.

Authorities emphasised that cooperation between farmers and technical teams is essential, as the success of pest management relies on adherence to official guidelines and control schedules. The Dubas palm pest, which feeds on palm sap, can severely reduce productivity if not managed promptly.

Through these inspections, specialists aim to obtain an accurate assessment of the pest’s presence in Sur, enabling effective intervention plans and ensuring the sustained health and productivity of date palm trees, reinforcing the ministry’s commitment to sustainable agricultural development and food security in Oman.

The ministry also urged farmers to participate actively in community awareness programmes and workshops on pest management, which are regularly organised across the wilayat.

Such initiatives aim to equip growers with the latest techniques in integrated pest management, enabling them to safeguard their crops while minimising reliance on chemical treatments, ultimately promoting environmentally sustainable farming practices.



Reminder

The Ministry of Information calls on media entities and professionals working in professions subject to licensing to take the initiative to regularize their status and fulfill the regulatory requirements before 14 March 2026, the deadline for the specified grace period. This comes in implementation of the provisions of the Executive Regulations of the Media Law and as part of ongoing efforts to foster a well-regulated media environment.

For further inquiries, please contact the numbers listed below during official working hours, or communicate via email:

Artistic Works Licensing Department

Office phone: 22651098 – 22651057
E-mail: a.alhashmi@omaninfo.om
ay.almuqbali@omaninfo.om

Media Activities Department

Office phone: 22651059 – 22651055
E-mail: abdullah.alhandhali@omaninfo.om
k.albadwi@omaninfo.om

Press and Media Licensing Department

Office phone: 22651176 – 22651056
E-mail: yah.alhashmi@omaninfo.om
h.alsiyabi@omaninfo.om



    @omaninfo1



CREATORS STEP BACK FROM DIGITAL NOISE

Content creators in Oman are rethinking their relationship with social media during the holy month, reducing screen time and embracing mindful routines while continuing to engage with their audiences



began, and scheduling posts in advance, she has managed to maintain a consistent online presence without being constantly tied to her phone. Muting non-essential notifications, avoiding unnecessary scrolling and stepping away from analytics have also helped her focus more on prayer, family and personal reflection.

A similar approach is taken by Zahra al Sulaimi, a technical engineer who runs the popular Instagram account FoodieOman. Ramadhan is usually one of the busiest periods for her platform, as followers look for hotel Iftar reviews before deciding where to dine.

Trying multiple Iftars while fasting, creating content and editing posts can be physically demanding, she says. However, pre-Ramadhan preview events organised by some hotels this year allowed bloggers to experience iftar menus earlier and prepare their content ahead of time.

Like Munazzah, Al Sulaimi has begun posting more intentionally and spending less time online during the month. Putting her phone away during family Iftars and avoiding late-night scrolling have become small but meaningful ways of reconnecting with the spirit of Ramadhan.

Across the creator community, many say Ramadhan is prompting a shift from constant digital engagement to more mindful interaction.

Makeup artist and content creator Riham Al Samad believes the month serves as a powerful reminder that fasting goes far beyond abstaining from food and drink. “Ramadhan is a profound spiritual journey,” she says, explaining that it encourages discipline, self-awareness and gratitude. During the holy month, she dedicates more time to prayer, reflection and reading the Quran, while consciously limiting digital distractions.

Similarly, Adela Eileen, founder of Noise Middle East, says choosing to reduce social media use has helped create space for meaningful conversations, shared meals and quiet reflection with family. Ramadhan, says Adela, brings a calmer and more intentional pace to daily life. “Ramadhan is not just a fast from food, but a retreat for the heart and mind — a chance to reconnect, reflect, and renew,” she adds.

For these creators, fasting also means stepping away from digital noise — even briefly — to reconnect with faith, gratitude and mindfulness. By reshaping their online habits, they say the holy month allows them to return to their platforms refreshed, more grounded and creatively renewed.

LIJU CHERIAN
@ljuchermanoman

In a digital age where creators are expected to remain constantly visible, Ramadhan is prompting several content creators and influencers in Oman to rethink how they engage with the online world. While their work often depends on regular posts, audience interaction and digital visibility, the holy month invites a slower rhythm — encouraging reflection, restraint and a deeper focus on faith and family.

For many influencers, the challenge lies in balancing professional commitments with the spiritual meaning of Ramadhan, finding ways to remain present online while stepping back personally from the pressures of social media.

Food influencer and fashion enthusiast, Munazzah Sheth says stepping away completely from the digital world is simply not possible in her line of work, particularly during Ramadhan when food content becomes highly sought after. “In my line of work, simply disappearing is not an option,” she explains, noting that her audience often relies on recommendations and dining inspiration during the holy month.

However, Munazzah has adopted a thoughtful strategy to create balance. By planning, shooting and editing her content before Ramadhan



“
Ramadhan is a time to slow down. Planning my content in advance allows me to stay present with family, prayer and reflection while still connecting with my audience.

MUNAZZAH
SHETH



“
Ramadhan is more than fasting; it is a journey of discipline, gratitude and spiritual reflection.

RIHAM AL
SAMAD

TENDER NOTICE

وزارة الزراعة والسمكية والمياه

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Retenders:

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are Eligible to Participate	Tender Document Fee (R.O)
664/2025/MAFWR/HQ-75 Recall-1	Drilling and Aquifer Testing of (10) Exploration Wells in the Wilayat of Mahdha, Al Buraimi Governorate	Tuesday 17/2/2026	Thursday 26/2/2026	Monday 9/3/2026	Specialized companies registered with, Second and Third grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
746/2025/MAFWR/HQ-87 Recall-1	Rehabilitation and Maintenance of the First Floor IT department	Thursday 19/2/2026	Sunday 1/3/2026	Wednesday 11/3/2026	Specialized companies registered with Third and Fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
109/2026/MAFWR/HQ-12	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Rolling Shutter Doors for the Food Security Department in Muscat Governorate	Thursday 19/2/2026	Wednesday 11/3/2026	Tuesday 31/3/2026	Specialized companies registered with Excellent, First, Second, Third and Fourth grades	(10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
110/2026/MAFWR/HQ-13	Design and Build Services for Detailed Design and Construction of Quay Wall and Land development at Al Musannah Fishery Harbour	Sunday 22/2/2026	Thursday 12/3/2026	Sunday 5/4/2026	Specialized companies registered with Fourth grades	(300/-) Omani riyals for local companies (30/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
113/2026/MAFWR/HQ-14	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning Electrical Distribution Boards for the Warehouses for the Food Security Department in Muscat Governorate	Monday 23/2/2026	Sunday 15/3/2026	Sunday 5/4/2026	Specialized companies registered with Excellent, First, Second, Third and Fourth grades	(10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

- Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.

- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.

- The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration for local companies.

- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.

- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402244 or etenderhd@pttc.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

SHORT TAKES



The lectures focused on the virtues and spiritual significance of Ramadhan including the Battle of Badr, the Conquest of Mecca, and the Battle of Ain Jalut. — ONA

RAMADHAN LECTURES HIGHLIGHT FAITH IN BATINAH SOUTH

AL RUSTAQ: Religious lectures were held at several mosques across the wilayats of Al Batinah South Governorate, organised by the Department of Endowments and Religious Affairs in the governorate.

Delivered by the department’s preachers, the lectures focused on the virtues and spiritual significance of the holy month of Ramadhan.

Speakers highlighted its unique characteristics and the blessings Muslims receive during this sacred period, including the significance of Laylat Al Qadr (the Night of Power), which is considered equal to a thousand months of worship for those who observe it with faith and devotion.

The preachers also discussed the jurisprudence of fasting and encouraged worshippers to increase acts of devotion during Ramadhan. These include performing voluntary prayers, reciting the Holy Quran, maintaining family ties and offering Zakat to those in need.

Special emphasis was placed on the spiritual importance of the last ten days of Ramadhan, which provide believers with a valuable opportunity to seek Laylat Al Qadr.

The lectures encouraged greater engagement in night prayers (Tahajjud), Quran recitation, and charitable acts that reflect the values of compassion and social solidarity.

Speakers also noted that these blessed days serve as a time for repentance and spiritual renewal, strengthening one’s relationship with Allah.

The lectures further highlighted significant historical events in Islamic history that took place during Ramadhan, including the Battle of Badr, the Conquest of Mecca, and the Battle of Ain Jalut. — ONA

‘Gift of Life’ organ donation campaign held in Nizwa

NIZWA: The second edition of the awareness campaign for organ donation, under the slogan ‘Gift of Life,’ was held in Nizwa. The campaign is organised by the Omani Centre for Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation in cooperation with the Omani Association for Organ Transplantation.

The event featured several interactive and educational corners providing visitors with comprehensive information on



The event provided visitors with information on donation and transplantation.

donation and transplantation. These included a corner introducing organ donation and

its procedures, a corner on blood and bone marrow donation, and a special corner for the Endowment

Health Foundation (Athar).

The campaign aims to raise public awareness about the importance of organ donation, foster values of human solidarity and highlight the role of youth in community initiatives supporting the nation’s health system.

Organisers emphasised that such initiatives contribute to creating a culture of voluntary donation and strengthen the community’s commitment to humanitarian efforts. — ONA

Culture comes alive at Sur’s Ramadhan Village

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
SUR, MARCH 8

ACTIVITIES AT the Ghazi Ramadhan Village in the Wilayat of Sur drew strong public participation as part of the 23rd edition of the Ghazi Ramadhan events, which concluded on March 5. The programme offered a diverse mix of cultural, educational and entertainment activities throughout the holy month.

The events, held at the City Centre Walkway in Sur, recently celebrated the winners of the popular ‘Seen-Jeem’ cultural quiz competition.

Contestants answered questions on topics including religion, arts, language, mathematics, sports and general knowledge, generating enthusiasm and lively interaction among the audience. The main stage hosted a range of cultural, artistic and awareness segments. Zainab bint Ali al Kathiri, Director of the Family Development Department at the Directorate-General of Social Development in Al Sharqiyah South, delivered a session on child protection, addressing abuse, neglect and bullying, while highlighting Oman’s Child Law safeguards.

Another awareness session, presented by Mariam bint Salem al Ismaili, Head of Administrative and Financial Affairs at the Consumer Protection Department in Al Sharqiyah South, focused on



The main stage hosted a range of cultural, artistic and awareness segments.

The Ramadhan Village also features booths for SMEs, productive families and local artisans

consumer rights. She emphasised monitoring children’s consumption, avoiding prohibited goods, inspecting products before purchase, and keeping receipts and warranties.

The cultural programme included a theatrical performance by the Sur Theatre Group, creatively addressing social challenges related to marriage, such as rising costs of weddings and dowries. Omani vocalists Ahmed al Manji, Hussein al Mukhaini, Abdullah al Khudhouri and Khalid al Araimi added a spiritual dimension with nasheed performances, warmly received by the audience.

Artist Abdulhakim al Salhi entertained visitors with traditional storytelling (Hakawati), sharing Islamic values and moral lessons in an interactive style appealing to both

adults and children.

The Ghazi Ramadhan Village also features booths for SMEs, productive families and local artisans, alongside photography and children’s drawing corners. Community organisations, including Sur Charity Team and the Zakat Committee of Sur, highlighted their humanitarian initiatives.

The initiative fosters community engagement, supports local economic activity, and strengthens partnerships between institutions and community groups, enriching the Ramadhan atmosphere in Sur.

Oman LNG recently unveiled the visual identity for the 23rd edition of the Ghazi Ramadhan events, reaffirming its continued support for this prominent community gathering.

Oman showcases diverse tourism offerings at ITB Berlin 2026

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabiyouusef

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, concluded its participation in the ITB Berlin 2026 tourism trade fair, held in Berlin from March 3 to 5.

ITB Berlin is the largest event in the global tourism sector, offering an opportunity to explore the latest industry developments, showcase tourism opportunities and promote Oman’s unique travel assets.

Oman also conducted a series of bilateral meetings with international tourism partners to develop joint packages and programmes aimed at boosting sustainable tourism flow.

“The aim of participating in this exhibition is to showcase Oman as a destination offering unique and attractive experiences for diverse target groups,” said Ahmed al Saadi, Head of Media Department, who accompanied the official delegation.

He added that the participation sought to enhance Oman’s presence at major international tourism exhibitions, highlight the latest developments in the tourism sector, connect with leading international companies and organisations, explore collaboration opportunities



Oman conducted a series of bilateral meetings with international tourism partners at ITB.

to increase tourist arrivals, and attend industry workshops.

“These workshops present the latest developments, statistics, and trends in the global travel and tourism industry. The exhibition also provides a significant promotional and economic platform for Omani

tourism companies, particularly SMEs,” Al Saadi noted.

The Omani pavilion attracted a large number of visitors due to the richness and diversity of its offerings and the innovative approaches highlighted this year. “It also reflected the wide range of

services and programmes offered by participating Omani companies,” he added. Yasser Mahdi, Regional Manager – Sales at Oman Air, said, “Our ongoing partnership with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism underscores Oman Air’s commitment to supporting the long-term growth

of Oman’s tourism sector. ITB provides a valuable platform to showcase all that Oman and Oman Air have to offer to a wide audience.”

Mahmoud al Jabri, founder of Miracle Oman Tourism Company, said their participation aimed to enhance Oman’s tourism sector by facilitating tourist access and providing comprehensive services, including guided tours, information on key heritage and archaeological sites, and accommodation in hotels and resorts.

ITB Berlin is an annual event that attracts leading tourism industry players from around the world, including major international organisations, companies and government entities representing around 190 countries.

The exhibition also addresses global tourism challenges, offering guided tours of key sectors, showcasing pioneering innovations and presenting sustainable solutions for the evolving industry. Key highlights included AI-powered hotel management systems.

According to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman welcomed 3,966,474 visitors from January to December 2025, including 137,386 from Germany alone.

US President Donald Trump said his war with Iran may only end with its military and rulers wiped out, as Tehran moved on Sunday towards picking a new supreme leader while missiles and drones flew across the Middle East. Shortly after Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One he was not interested in negotiating an end to the conflict that has roiled oil markets, hurt business and snarled global travel, US ally Israel announced fresh strikes across Iran that it said had hit critical fuel storage sites. “At some point, I don’t think there will be anybody left maybe to say, ‘We surrender,’” Trump said.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates nd Bahrain reported Iranian drone attacks, with a huge fire engulfing a government office block in Kuwait. The US Embassy in Norway’s capital Oslo was also hit by an explosion early on Sunday, causing minor damage but no injuries, police said. It was not immediately clear what caused the blast. Saudi Arabia has told Tehran that continued Iranian attacks on the kingdom and its enery sector could push Riyadh to respond in kind, people familiar with the matter said.

In an apparent attempt to cool anger across the Gulf, Iran’s president apologised to neighbouring states for its attacks on US facilities in those countries on Saturday. He dismissed Trump’s earlier demand for the Islamic Republic’s unconditional surrender as “a dream,” but said its temporary leadership council had agreed to suspend attacks on nearby states unless strikes on Iran originated from their territory.

Pezeshkian’s comments faced backlash from some hardliners in Iran, prompting his office to reiterate that Iran’s military would

TRUMP HAS JUSTIFIED THE BIGGEST US MILITARY OPERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE THE 2003 INVASION OF IRAQ BY SAYING TEHRAN POSED AN IMMINENT THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES, WITHOUT PROVIDING EVIDENCE. HE HAS ALSO SAID IRAN WAS TOO CLOSE TO BEING ABLE TO BUILD A NUCLEAR WEAPON

respond firmly to attacks from US bases. The clerical body charged with choosing Iran’s next supreme leader could meet as soon as Sunday to name a successor to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in an attack early in the conflict, Iranian media reported. A majority consensus over the successor has more or less been reached, said Assembly of Experts member Ayatollah Mohammad Mehdi Mirbaqeri, according to the Mehr news agency.

The Israeli military, in a post on X, warned it would pursue every successor.

Trump has justified the biggest US military operation in the Middle East since the 2003 invasion of Iraq by saying Tehran posed an imminent threat to the United States, without providing evidence. He has also said Iran was too close to being able to build a nuclear weapon.

The US and Israel have discussed sending special forces into Iran to secure its stockpile of highly enriched uranium at a later stage of the war, Axios reported, citing four people with knowledge of the discussions. Asked about the possibility of sending ground troops to secure nuclear sites on Saturday, Trump said it was something they could do “later on.”

Huge explosions were heard in parts of Tehran, state media reported, while Israel said it had struck Iranian missile sites, command centres and fuel depots on Saturday. The US-Israeli attacks have killed at least 1,332 Iranian civilians and wounded thousands, according to Iran’s UN ambassador, Amir Saeid Iravani. — AFP



Smoke rises after a reported strike on Shahran fuel tanks, Tehran. — Reuters



Members of Iran’s Red Crescent society stand near smoke plumes. — AFP



Aftermath of an Iranian missile strike, in central Israel. — Reuters



US President Donald Trump salutes as members of a US Army team carry the flag-draped transfer case containing the remains of a US soldier during a dignified transfer solemn event at Dover Air Force Base. — AFP



TEHRAN PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS BY SMOKE FROM BURNING OIL

TRUMP REJECTS SETTLING IRAN WAR

Smoke rises following an explosion, in Tehran. — Reuters

WAR CAUSES MAJOR OIL, GAS DISRUPTIONS

PRODUCTION SHUTDOWNS

- **KUWAIT FORCE MAJEURE:** Kuwait Petroleum Corporation began cutting oil output and declared force majeure on March 7 due to the war shutting exports via the Strait of Hormuz.
- **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES OUTPUT:** Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) said on March 7 it was actively managing offshore output levels to preserve “operational flexibility”. There was also a fire caused by debris at the UAE’s Fujairah port.
- **IRAQ WARNS OF FURTHER CUTS:** OPEC’s second-largest producer, Iraq, slashed almost 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) due to lack of storage and export capacity that figure could rise to 3 million bpd within days if exports did not resume.
- **QATARENERGY LNG HALTED:** Qatar stopped operations at its LNG facilities on March 2, affecting some of the world’s largest plants and a source that supplies about 20 per cent of global LNG. It declared force majeure on LNG shipments on March 4.
- **SAUDI DISRUPTIONS:** Saudi Arabia suspended output at its 550,000-bpd Ras Tanura refinery and has begun rerouting crude loadings from eastern ports to Yanbu on the Red Sea.

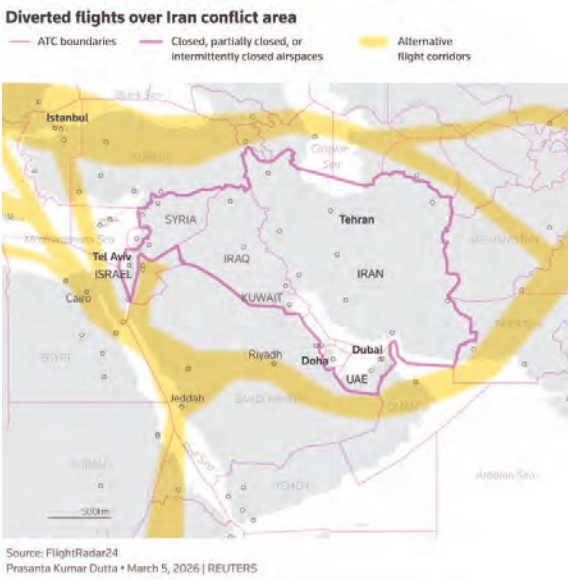
SHIPPING

- **STRAIT OF HORMUZ:** traffic through the Strait was largely closed after Iran attacked at least five ships, with a limited number of tankers transiting, choking off a key artery accounting for about 20 per cent of global oil and LNG supply.
- **IRAN DECLARES THE STRAIT CLOSED:** A senior Iranian Revolutionary Guards official said on March 2 that the Strait of Hormuz was closed and warned that Iran would fire on any ship attempting to pass.
- **WAR RISK INSURANCE CANCELLED:** Major marine insurers are cancelling war-risk coverage for vessels operating in Iranian, Gulf and adjacent waters.
- **US OFFERS ASSURANCES:** Trump said the US Navy could escort tankers through the Strait and directed the US International Development Finance Corporation to provide political-risk insurance.

IMPACT ON CONSUMERS

- **CHINA CUTS REFINERY RUNS:** Chinese refiners are shutting crude units or advancing planned maintenance due to disrupted crude flows.
- **INDIA SEEKS ALTERNATIVES:** India is looking for substitute sources of crude, LPG and LNG to prepare itself if the crisis extends beyond 10-15 days, a government official said.
- **INDONESIA SHIFTS SOURCING:** Indonesia plans to increase US crude imports to offset reduced Middle East supply.
- **ALTERNATIVE SUPPLIES:** Cargoes from Brazil, West Africa and the US are possible but take over a month to reach Asia and are costlier amid soaring freight rates, traders said.

— Reuters



Smoke rises after an Iranian drone was intercepted in Manama, Bahrain. — Reuters

Kuwait airport, Bahrain desalination unit struck

KUWAIT CITY: Iran struck Gulf infrastructure on Sunday, hitting fuel tanks at Kuwait’s international airport and damaging a desalination plant in Bahrain as Tehran pressed its missile and drone campaign against its neighbours into a second week. Two border guards were also killed “while performing their national duty”, Kuwait’s interior ministry said without elaborating on the circumstances. Neighbouring countries have borne much of Tehran’s response after the US and Israel launched a massive air campaign against Iran, with 16 people, eight of them civilians, killed in the Gulf states since the war began. — AFP



A man sets up a tent for displaced people, inside a stadium in Beirut. — Reuters

Beirut death toll nears 400 from Israeli strikes

BEIRUT: Israel’s military said it struck Iranian commanders in the Lebanese capital early on Sunday, expanding the scope of strikes to the heart of Beirut after days of strikes that have left nearly 400 people dead. The drone strike was the first within the city limits of Lebanon’s capital since hostilities resumed last week, and came amid heavy bombardment on Beirut’s southern suburbs. Lebanon says four people were killed in the strike, part of a rapidly rising death toll that has reached 394 people, the health ministry said on Sunday, including at least 83 children and 42 women. Lebanon’s health ministry does not otherwise distinguish between civilians and military personnel. — Reuters



French aircraft carrier Charles-de-Gaulle sails in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Toulon. — AFP

Macron to visit Cyprus as France deploys warships

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron will visit Cyprus on Monday, his office said, as France deploys warships to the Mediterranean following a drone attack on Cyprus days ago. Macron will meet Cypriot counterpart Nikos Christodoulides and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Paphos to show “solidarity” and detail moves to “strengthen security around Cyprus and in the eastern Mediterranean”, the Elysee said on Sunday. The visit will take place as the war pitting US and Israel against Iran is in its second week, affecting much of the Middle East. Cyprus, an EU country, on Monday was targeted by drones, leading Macron to order France’s Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier to the Mediterranean and a frigate and air defence units to Cyprus. — AFP

OPINION

Harnessing critical thinking skills amid times of crisis



SANDHYA RAO MEHTA

The writer is Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University

AT NO other point in recent history have we, in the Middle East, been so caught up in uncertainty and nervousness. As we read rolling news and engage in doom scrolling, we are also stopping at every piece of unverified news, every reel on social media, wondering what or who to trust.

In the ongoing crisis today, the rumours have flown indiscriminately. From missiles landing in the middle of prosperous Gulf cities to embassies asking all its expatriate citizens to leave, social media has been fraught with frightful details, all of which were fake.

Not only did this affect residents, but also made their families back home nervous. In fact, many were urging their family members to return, only to be told that what they were listening to was incorrect information.

Added to this was the news that supermarkets were running out of supplies, until the concerned officials took out public notices that this was not the case.

Another type of misinformation involved false reports about military attacks. In fact, some social media posts claimed

that certain cities or oil facilities had been destroyed, even when there was no official confirmation. Such rumours, while traumatising the population, also had an impact on financial markets which saw many stocks slide downwards on the back of false information.

Another dangerous form of fake news is the sharing of old photos and videos from previous conflicts. These images are sometimes reposted and falsely described as events happening in the current war.

Often done for a bump in views and sharing on social media platforms, these videos only generated more panic and confusion.

Governments and news organisations in the Gulf are encouraging people to rely on trusted sources and official statements. They also warn the community not to spread unverified information online.

By checking facts and thinking critically before sharing news, people can help reduce the spread of misinformation during this period of conflict and war.

The triage of verifying, looking for evidence and taking news from trusted sources helps us to discern news from

Cross-checking key facts across multiple independent sources acts as a clear guide to understanding a situation

rumours at such a dangerous time.

Critical thinking helps us to sieve the information overload typical of our world today. In a time of crisis, for example, there is surfeit data in the form of rumours, supposedly expert input, and infinite social media posts.

In such a situation, the important questions to ask include: who is providing the information? What is their official or academic standing? Is there any evidence to support their claims? Is there any obvious benefit to those providing this information?

Cross-checking key facts across multiple independent sources acts as a clear guide to understanding a situation. It is also important not to instinctively share any video or ‘news’ that comes in our chat boxes.

Learning to apply critical thinking in times of crisis should be a matter of habit. Often, it is a product of strategic reading, thoughtful interactions with ideas and people, as well as practice.

By checking facts, using reliable sources, and thinking carefully before sharing information, we can protect ourselves and others from misinformation which results in panic and fearmongering.

POPE URGES END TO BOMBING, CALLS FOR DIALOGUE

GISELDA VAGNONI

Pope Leo said on Sunday that deeply troubling news continued to arrive from Iran and across the Middle East, urging an end to the violence and renewed efforts to open space for dialogue.

As fighting escalated on the ninth day of the US-Israeli assault on Iran, the first US pope warned that the conflict was fuelling fear and hatred and raised concerns that it could spread further.

“Alongside the episodes of violence and devastation and the widespread climate of hatred and fear, there is also growing concern that the conflict could spread and that other countries in the region, including dear Lebanon, could once again sink into instability,” Leo said at the Angelus prayer in St Peter’s Square.

“Let us raise our humble prayer to the Lord that the roar of bombs may cease, that weapons may fall silent, and that space may be opened for dialogue in which the voices of peoples can be heard”, he added.

The Vatican’s top diplomat warned on Wednesday that the U.S.-Israeli strikes undermined international law and said nations did not have a right to launch “preventive wars”, an unusually direct criticism of the military campaign.

Meanwhile, Pope Leo last week named a senior Church diplomat who represented the Vatican in the Philippines during former President Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs as the Vatican’s US ambassador and envoy to the Trump administration.

Italian Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, 68, served for two years in Manila before becoming the Vatican’s UN ambassador in 2020.

His appointment follows Vatican criticism of US-Israeli strikes on Iran, with the Vatican’s top diplomat, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, saying that the military campaign had undermined international law.

Leo, the first US pope, has also openly criticised some of Trump’s right-wing policies. He has described Trump’s immigration crackdown, which has convulsed cities across the United States, as “inhuman.”

Caccia, widely seen as one of the more experienced diplomats in the Vatican’s foreign service, will arrive in Washington as some US bishops have ramped up criticism of Trump.

The Vatican, which maintains about 110 embassies worldwide, considers Washington one of its most important diplomatic postings.

The ambassador must represent the Church’s priorities at the White House, and envoys over the decades have contested policies of various US administrations. — AFP

How war in the Middle East could sow hunger

THE LONGER the conflict in the Middle East continues, the greater the likelihood that people around the globe will pay more for food.

And those in the most vulnerable countries could face hunger. The Arabian Gulf is a dominant source of fertiliser. Though the region is best known as a prodigious source of oil and natural gas, its abundance of energy has spurred the development of factories that make the raw materials for many types of fertiliser, especially those that deliver nitrogen.

Nitrogen fertilisers are essentially natural gas reconfigured as plant nutrients. They nourish crops that yield roughly half the world’s food supply.

For now, most factories in the Arabian Gulf that make nitrogen fertilisers are continuing to produce them.

But delivering their wares to farmers is suddenly impossible, given the effective shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow channel linking the Gulf to the Indian Ocean.

The cessation of marine traffic on the strait is the primary reason that oil and gas prices have surged. If the waterway remains off limits, prices for key fertilisers, and the chemicals used to make them, will go up. That could prompt farmers to limit their application, reducing the world’s food supply while making sustenance less affordable.

“It’s bad — there’s no other way of putting it,” said Chris Lawson, vice-president of market intelligence and prices at CRU Group, a London-based research and data firm focused on commodities. “The world is highly reliant on fertiliser and associated raw materials supplied out of that region.”

War has a way of exposing vulnerabilities that arise from interconnection. Four years ago, when Russia invaded Ukraine, the world gained a wrenching lesson in



PETER S GOODMAN

The writer is an American economics journalist and author

The longer the conflict in the Middle East continues, the greater the likelihood that people around the globe will pay more for food. And those in the most vulnerable countries could face hunger



A produce store in the Brixton Village market of South London.

the geography of agriculture. Both countries were substantial sources of wheat and other grains. Shortages of bread soon emerged from West Africa to South Asia.

Russia and Ukraine also produce significant quantities of fertiliser. The enduring conflict made those products scarce, driving up prices and prompting farmers to conserve their use of fertiliser. The result was depleted harvests.

The latest upheaval in the Middle East does not affect the harvesting of grain, but its impacts for fertiliser may be even more profound.

“The volumes are greater this time around, potentially, than in the Russia-Ukraine conflict,” said Sarah Marlow, global editor for fertilisers at Argus Media, a news and data service focused on commodities. “You’ve got multiple producing countries.”

Fertilisers can be divided into three basic types that deliver particular nutrients to soils: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

Five primary fertiliser exporters — Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE and Bahrain — rely heavily on the Strait of Hormuz to export their wares.

Collectively, these countries supply more than one-third of the world’s trade in urea, the dominant form of nitrogen fertiliser, as well as nearly one-fourth of another type, ammonia, according to data compiled by the International Fertilizer Association, a trade group based in London. The same five countries produce nearly one-fifth of phosphate fertilisers.

One major source of urea, QatarEnergy, halted production this past week when it lost access to natural gas after strikes from Iranian drones and missiles. Other factories are continuing to make urea, stockpiling it near ports and waiting for shipping to restart.

“No one knows how long this could go on and still have enough storage,” said Laura Cross, director of market intelligence at the International Fertilizer Association.

Some view the evolving crisis confronting agriculture as a warning sign about excessive reliance on a handful of fertiliser producers to satisfy humanity’s need for calories.

The pandemic exposed the risks of depending on a single country, China, for basic ingredients for medicines. — *The New York Times*

Leadership lessons from Ramadhan



ABDULAZIZ
AL JAHDHAMI

The writer is
an author,
translator and a
communications
professional

IN BOARDROOMS and business schools, leadership is often discussed in terms of strategy, performance, and results. Yes, we all agree that the metrics matter, vision statements inspire and the targets define success. However, some of the most enduring leadership lessons are not found in corporate manuals, but in lived experiences that shape characters.

Ramadhan, observed by millions worldwide as a month of fasting, reflection, and renewal, offers a profound model of leadership rooted in discipline, empathy, and purpose. Ramadhan stands as a deeply personal spiritual journey.

From dawn to sunset, individuals refrain from food and drink, while striving to improve their conduct and strengthen their faith. But beneath this spiritual practice lies a leadership framework built on self-mastery — the foundation of all effective leadership.

The first lesson Ramadhan teaches is simple yet powerful that you cannot lead others if you cannot lead yourself. Fasting demands discipline; it requires managing feelings, controlling reactions, and staying committed to a higher purpose despite physical discomfort. This daily exercise in control mirrors one of the core traits of successful leaders.

In moments of pressure, strong leaders respond thoughtfully rather than react rashly. Ramadhan strengthens this capacity! Hunger and fatigue may test patience, but the discipline of the fast encourages calmness, reflection, and measured action. The ability

to stay composed under stress is not just a spiritual virtue; it is a leadership necessity.

Ramadhan is not about deprivation for its own sake. It is rooted in intention as every fast begins with a conscious decision and a clear purpose. Similarly, effective leadership is not about authority alone; it is about clarity of mission.

Organisations thrive when leaders articulate purpose beyond profit. Teams are more engaged when they understand the “why” behind their work. Ramadhan reinforces the importance of intention — reminding leaders that meaningful impact begins with clearly defined values and aligned actions.

Perhaps the most transformative leadership lesson Ramadhan offers is empathy. Experiencing hunger firsthand deepens understanding of those who face hardship daily. This shared exposure builds compassion and humbleness.

In leadership, empathy is not a weakness, but a strength. Leaders who listen actively, consider diverse perspectives, and genuinely care about the wellbeing of their teams foster loyalty and trust. Ramadhan’s emphasis on charity and community service reinforces the idea that true influence is measured not by power, but by positive impact on others.

Throughout Ramadhan, acts of service are many. Communities organise food distributions, families host Iftars, and volunteers step forward to support those in need. This culture of service aligns closely with the concept of servant leadership —

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The most respected leaders are often those who prioritise the growth and wellbeing of their teams. They remove obstacles, create opportunities, and elevate others. Ramadhan’s spirit of giving highlights that leadership is not about being at the centre of attention, but about enabling others to succeed.

Ramadhan also cultivates patience. Fasting from dawn to sunset is a daily reminder that rewards often require persistence. In business and governance, short-term wins may bring quick applause, but long-term vision builds lasting success. Leaders who exercise patience, think strategically, and remain consistent in their values are better equipped to navigate ambiguity.

Ramadhan is observed with a strong sense of personal accountability. Even when no one is watching, individuals maintain their fast. This internal moral compass is essential in leadership. Integrity is most authentic when it operates beyond external supervision.

In a world where leadership is often linked with authority and influence, Ramadhan offers a modest but more permanent model — one grounded in self-control, compassion, humility and intention. The greatest leaders are not simply those who direct others. They are those who master themselves, serve their communities, and act with purpose.

Ultimately, Ramadhan, in its essence, is not only a month of spiritual devotion. It is a masterclass in leadership that shows the strongest form of power begins within.

WHY HAVE 1,000 SHIPS AT TIMES LOST THEIR GPS IN THE MIDEAST?

IVAN COURONNE AND ISABEL MALSANG

The global positioning system (GPS) capabilities of cargo ships, oil tankers and other vessels stuck in the Middle East because of the widening war are likely worse than those in your cell phone.

Experts say this deficiency explains why since the start of US-Israeli strikes, the jamming of satellite navigation signals has left about 1,000 ships in the Gulf unable to determine their location, either momentarily or continuously.

Dimitris Ampatzidis, a senior risk and compliance analyst for the energy market intelligence firm Kpler, said the number represents about half of the vessels in the area.

A satellite navigation system is made up of a constellation of satellites that send signals with the time to Earth, allowing the receiver to determine its precise location.

Modern smartphones receive signals from four groups of satellites: the American, European (Galileo), Russian (GLONASS) and Chinese (BeiDou) Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS).

Most cell phones now use two GPS frequency bands - one that is older and fainter, and a second that is newer and stronger.

But “many ships only listen to the original civilian GPS signal, which is called the L1 C/A signal. It’s the one that’s been around since the early 1990s for civilian use,” Todd Humphreys, an engineering professor at the University of Texas at Austin, said.

Most ships are thus unable to rely on the BeiDou or Galileo systems in the event that a GPS is jammed.

The situation is even worse for airplanes, due to aviation regulations.

“You will not find any aircraft flying in the world today whose built-in GPS receiver is capable of tracking and interpreting signals other than the GPS L1 C/A. So it’s out of date by 15 years,” Humphreys said.

Jamming a GPS signal is “not that complicated,” said Katherine Dunn, the author of an upcoming book of the history of GPS, ‘Little Blue Dot.’

All one needs is “another radio transmitter that can broadcast on the same frequency, but louder,” she said, which creates “a wall of mush.”

Spoofing is more sophisticated - and more dangerous, affecting a ship’s Automatic Identification System, or AIS.

Every vessel transmits a message per second over a universal radio frequency that announces its identity, destination and position.

Spoofing manipulates that system, causing the affected ship to send a fake, or even nonsensical, location - meaning that ships could appear to be on land. — AFP

Where Trump voters draw red lines on Iran



Loretta Torres, a stay at home mom who voted for Donald Trump in the 2024 presidential election, poses for a portrait at her home in Baytown, Texas, US. — Reuters



JULIA HARTE

The writer is a
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Republicans as the US heads into all-important midterm elections in November that will determine whether Congress stays in the party’s control.

Although most of the voters Reuters interviewed reported that gasoline in their area had shot up between 20 and 50 cents per gallon, those who supported the strikes said they expected the higher prices to be short-lived.

Jon Webber, 45, a Walmart retail worker in Indiana, pointed to the struggle his parents had with volatile oil prices following the 1979 Iranian Revolution. “Yeah, it’s gonna suck for a little bit, but it’ll go back,” he said.

After watching US presidents invoke the threat posed by Iran for most of his life, Webber said it felt good to see Trump cripple the regime: “It should have been done a long time ago and we wouldn’t have had to deal with it for this long.”

Near Houston, Texas, Loretta Torres, 38, said she trusted the president had acted judiciously. “Trump was trying to get ahead of the game and trying to be proactive with the threats,” she said.

But Torres, a mother of three, also said she feared the war could spin “out of control” or inspire attacks on major metropolitan

areas like hers. Like all the voters Reuters interviewed, she dreaded the prospect of the US becoming enmeshed in the region for years if Trump sends in ground troops.

The voters who supported the strikes were confident Trump had authorised them because they were necessary to thwart an imminent attack on the United States.

Democrats and even prominent conservative commentators have expressed scepticism about this, citing the administration’s varying explanations for the war.

Chad Hill, 50, a supervisor at a nuclear power plant near his home in northwestern Ohio, said he had been expecting some type of US military action, despite US-Iran negotiations that had been under way over Iran’s nuclear programme just days before the strikes: “Unfortunately, it seems like this was probably the only way because in the end they don’t trust us and we don’t trust them.”

Trump might need to send a limited military detachment into the country to fully destroy Iran’s missile capabilities, Hill said, but any larger ground deployment would raise red flags for him. “No nation-building, that doesn’t work,” he said.

The idea of US boots on Iranian ground also made Gerald Dunn, 67, uneasy. “Only if they’re invited” by a new Iranian government should Trump deploy ground troops, he said, and even then, “the scale should be limited.”

Like Hill, Dunn, a martial arts instructor in New York’s Hudson Valley, applauded Trump for taking action where prior administrations had simply “kicked the can down the road.”

Near Savannah, Georgia, insurance firm employee Amanda Taylor, 52, said that while “there’s so much we don’t really know,” she would back any military action that made the US safer.

“Our intelligence is usually right in these things so I’m going to hope and trust that (Trump acted) because of that, and not just because of his own gut feeling,” she said.

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



The horse ‘Azza’, owned by the Royal Cavalry, crosses the finish line.

‘AZZA’ WINS AT ABU DHABI RACECOURSE

MUSCAT: The horse ‘Azza’, owned by the Royal Cavalry, secured first place in the fourth race held at Abu Dhabi Racecourse in the United Arab Emirates on Saturday.

The race was dedicated to maiden Purebred Arabian horses over a distance of 1,600 metres. ‘Azza’ delivered an impressive performance under jockey Ray Dawson and was trained by Ibrahim al Hadhrami.

While ‘Sawan’ finished second, owned by Yas Racing and ridden by jockey Silvestre De Sousa under the supervision of trainer Majid al Jahwari.

Third place was snatched by ‘Fernakten Tern’, owned by Khalid al Nabooda, with jockey Tadhg O’Shea in the saddle and trained by Ernst Oertel.

OMAN WOMEN MAKE HISTORY WITH WT20I TRIUMPHS



Oman team with support staff after their series win over Qatar in Doha.

MUSCAT: Oman’s women’s cricket team continues to make impressive strides, translating recent success into historic milestones and a sharp rise in the Women’s T20I rankings.

After winning 10 of 12 WT20Is in 2025, Oman carried that momentum into 2026 with a 4-0 home series sweep over Denmark and a 4-1 away series victory against Qatar in Doha — their first international tour in two years.

The team’s progress has been reflected in the rankings, with Oman climbing to 36th in the world after being outside the standings and below 75th in 2024. Jayadhanyha Gunasekar has been central to that rise, becoming the first Omani woman to score a WT20I century with an unbeaten 101 off 62 balls against Denmark on February 6, 2026, at Al Amerat. She is now Oman’s leading run-scorer with 774 runs in 20 innings, ranked 77th globally among WT20I batters, and holds the second-highest career batting average in the format at 48.37. Oman’s batting strength has also been boosted by Fiza Javed (621 runs) and Priyanka Mendonca (576), giving the side greater stability at the top of the order.

Head coach Desmond Berhardt said the Denmark series helped build confidence, while the Qatar tour — where three matches were decided in the final over provided a sterner test. Oman still emerged 4-1 winners, with Jayadhanyha named Player of the Tournament.

Berhardt praised the players’ growth in confidence and maturity, saying the team had returned stronger and better prepared to build on its recent success.



Seeb players celebrate their U19 Football League title on the podium

Seeb triumph 2-1 over Al Musannah to win U19 League

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

A dramatic goal by Seeb striker Ali bin Rabie al Alawi in the 89th minute crowned Seeb Club U19 Football League for the 2025–26 season, securing their third title in the competition after defeating Al Musannah 2-1.

The final match was played on Saturday evening at Seeb Sports Stadium in the Wilayat of Al Seeb, in the auspices of Eng Qutaiba bin Said al Ghailani, Deputy Chairman of the Oman Football Association.

Seeb took the lead in the 25th minute, the ball deflected off an Al Musannah defender and fell to Abdulrahman al Busaidy, who struck a low shot into the right corner past goalkeeper Al Mutasim al Badri to make it 1-0.

Al Musannah responded in the 36th minute when their captain Murshid al Jaradi rose above the defence to head home from a well delivered corner from



Action packed moment from the final

the right flank, beating goalkeeper Sultan al Badri to level the score at 1-1.

The first half ended with both sides locked at 1-1 after an entertaining spell of play in which Seeb enjoyed slightly better control. The second half grew more intense as Al Musannah searched for the lead. In the 88th minute Abdulhadi al Buraiki took a penalty, but goalkeeper Sultan al Badri made a crucial save to keep the score level.

In the 89th minute Ali bin Rabie al Alawi received the ball inside the penalty area and produced a composed finish into the right corner, sealing a dramatic victory and confirming Seeb as champions.

Seeb reached the final after defeating Al Amerat on penalties following a 1-1 draw in their semifinal at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher. Al Musannah also advanced after beating Salalah 5-4 in a penalty shootout following a 1-1 draw in their semifinal at the Al Rustaq Sports Complex.

THIRD-PLACE PLAYOFF

In the third-place playoff, Al Amerat claimed the bronze medal after defeating Salalah 3-0, in the playoff match held at Al Seeb Sports Stadium on Friday, concluding their participation with a strong performance. Al Amerat secured the bronze medal with a 3-0 victory over Salalah. Tamim al Buraiki scored in the 47th minute and added another in the 60th, before Ahmed al Amrani sealed the win with a late goal in the 89th minute.

Al Nasr edge Dhofar in derby as Al Shabab keep pace in JL

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

Al Nasr claimed a valuable 1-0 victory over Dhofar in the Dhofar Governorate derby, played at Al Saada Sports Complex Stadium in Round 16 of the Jindal Oman Football League. The match began at a lively pace, but Al Nasr needed only one minute to make the breakthrough as Awad al Shehri converted a pass from Mohammed Abdulhakim inside the penalty area to score what proved to be the winning goal. Dhofar then pushed for a response through a series of attacking moves, with Abdullah Zahir going closest in the 14th and 20th minutes. Goalkeeper Ibrahim al Rajhi, however, stood firm to preserve his side’s lead. Al Nasr also threatened to add a second in the 26th minute through Hussein al Shehri, but Dhofar’s defence recovered in time.

The score remained



A strong battle in midfield as Al Shabab fight for control.

unchanged through the second half despite chances at both ends, with Dhofar unable to find an equaliser and substitute Mutasim al Noobi missing a late chance to seal the result for Al Nasr. The win lifted Al Nasr to 35 points in third place, while Dhofar stayed 10th on 14 points.

AL SHABAB KEEP TITLE PRESURE ALIVE

In another encounter, Al Shabab continued their



Al Nasr and Dhofar produced a derby full of passion, pressure and intensity.

pursuit of leaders Al Seeb with an emphatic 4-1 win over Oman Club at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

Ahmed al Riyami opened the scoring in the 23rd minute with a header from Yousuf al Malki’s corner, before Hatem al Roshdi made it 2-0 five minutes later. Oman Club reduced the deficit in the 36th minute through a powerful strike from Bassam al Sheen, but Al Shabab responded strongly as Maliko Kinyan

scored the third in the 42nd minute and added a fourth from the penalty spot in first-half stoppage time.

Oman Club attempted to fight their way back after the break, but Al Shabab remained organised at the back and saw out the match comfortably. The win took Al Shabab to 38 points in second place, while Oman Club stayed seventh on 21.

BAHLA AND SAHAM COLLECT IMPORTANT WIN

Elsewhere, Bahla defeated Al Rustaq 3-1 at Nizwa Sports Complex, with Abdulsalam al Shukaili scoring a hat-trick. Bahla moved to 28 points in sixth place, while Al Rustaq remained bottom on five points.

In the final match of the round, Saham beat Al Nahda 1-0 at Sohar Sports Complex through Abdullah Al Marikhi’s winner, moving up to eighth on 19 points, while Al Nahda stayed fifth on 28.



India players celebrate on the podium with the trophy after winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup — Reuters

INDIA CRUSH NEW ZEALAND TO WIN THIRD T20 WORLD CUP TITLE



Suryakumar Yadav lifts the trophy with teammates as they celebrate after winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. — Reuters



India flags are displayed on the pitch as they celebrates after winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

LIST OF MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP WINNERS AFTER INDIA BEAT NEW ZEALAND BY 96 RUNS TO WIN A RECORD THIRD TITLE:

YEAR	WINNERS	RUNNERS-UP
2007	India	Pakistan
2009	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
2010	England	Australia
2012	West Indies	Sri Lanka
2014	Sri Lanka	India
2016	West Indies	England
2021	Australia	New Zealand
2022	England	Pakistan
2024	India	South Africa
2026	India	New Zealand

INDIA won a record third T20 World Cup title and became the first team to defend their crown with a 96-run thumping of New Zealand in a lop-sided final on Sunday.

Suryakumar Yadav's India were also the first team to lift the trophy on home soil as over 86,000 fans celebrated at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

England and the West Indies have won two titles each.

Sanju Samson's blistering 89 off 46 balls guided the co-hosts to 255-5 and Jasprit Bumrah starred as New Zealand were bowled out for 159 in 19 overs.

Part-time spinner Abhishek Sharma claimed the final wicket of Jacob Duffy, securing a dominant victory.

Axar Patel struck two early blows, including the dangerous Finn Allen for nine, with his left-arm spin.

Bumrah was again at his mesmerising best, delivering a succession of brilliant slower-ball yorkers to finish with figures of 4-15.

Opener Tim Seifert hit 52 off 26 balls but his departure in the ninth over off struggling spinner Varun Chakravarthy effectively ended the Black Caps' slim hopes.

Wickets kept tumbling and Bumrah struck with successive deliveries to bring up a hat-trick ball

which was just about negotiated by Lockie Ferguson.

Skipper Mitchell Santner hit 43 but was never going to be able to prevent New Zealand from slipping to their second T20 World Cup final loss after they went down to Australia in 2021.

India exorcised the ghosts of the past at the same venue from when they were shocked by Australia in the 2023 ODI World Cup final.

Earlier, the in-form Samson, who hit 97 not out and 89 in his previous two innings to keep India in the tournament, hit five fours and eight sixes to thrill the raucous home crowd, which included former World Cup winning captains Rohit

Sharma and MS Dhoni.

Samson's opening stand of 98 with Abhishek, who plundered 52 off 21 balls, laid the platform for India to go on and score more than 250 for a second straight match, after their seven-run semi-final win over England, and for the third time in the tournament.

Abhishek and Samson waited two overs before they launched a batting blitz to flay New Zealand's attack to all parts of the ground during the powerplay.

Rachin Ravindra finally broke the partnership, having Abhishek caught behind off a wide delivery.

Samson was joined by Ishan Kishan, who hammered 54 off 25

balls with four fours and as many sixes.

Samson reached his third successive fifty and changed gears to hit Ravindra for three straight sixes.

Jimmy Neesham pulled things back for New Zealand with three wickets in one over to give them hope of keeping India to a gettable total.

He removed Samson, Kishan and Suryakumar for a duck -- the last two on successive balls.

But Shivam Dube finished with a flourish, blasting an unbeaten 26 off eight balls as he hit Neesham for three fours and two sixes in the 20th over, leaving New Zealand with far too much to do. — AFP

SPORTS

OMAR
DOUBLE
SENDS
CITY
INTO
THE
LAST
EIGHTS

MANCHESTER City's Omar Marmoush struck twice as the visitors roared back from a goal down to beat Newcastle United 3-1 on Saturday and storm into the FA Cup quarterfinals for the eighth consecutive season.

The win keeps Pep Guardiola's side on track for a fourth successive FA Cup final appearance, and keeps alive the chance of an elusive quadruple Premier League, Champions League, League Cup and FA Cup trophies in a single season.

"This is the best performance we have played in this stadium since my decade here," Guardiola told TNT Sports.

"That is consistency and that is why I am proud."

Newcastle got off to a bright start and Harvey Barnes ran onto a through ball before firing into the far corner in the 18th minute to give the hosts the lead.

Seven-times FA Cup winners City, who are second in the Premier League, then flexed their muscles and Savinho equalised in the 39th with a bizarre goal when Jeremy Doku's ball behind the defence rolled to the Brazilian and bounced in off his leg.

Marmoush scored the first of his two goals and seventh against Newcastle since joining City in January last year, in the 47th when Matheus Nunes found him unmarked with a low ball across the face of goal and he fired into the roof of the net.

Marmoush completed his double in the 65th minute in similar fashion, latching onto a Nunes cross and striking a fierce shot.

There was no chance of a hat-trick as Guardiola sent Antoine Semenyo on the Egyptian's place shortly after.

The manager, who was animated all night, waving his arms and jumping up and down, wrapped Marmoush in a huge hug as the forward headed to the bench.

"A decent performance, we didn't start so



Manchester City's Omar Marmoush celebrates scoring their third goal. — Reuters



Manchester City's Phil Foden in action with Newcastle United's Sandro Tonali Action. — Reuters

well," Marmoush told TNT. "We conceded early, but we showed our mentality and our passion on the pitch ... we're very happy to go to the next round."

Guardiola made 10 changes for the fifth-round tie from the team that drew 2-2 at home to Nottingham Forest on Wednesday.

City's Premier League-leading scorer Erling Haaland was not part of the squad ahead of an intense run of fixtures, including a Champions League last-16 clash at Real Madrid on Wednesday.

Newcastle boss Eddie Howe felt his players "maybe ran out of gas, certainly in the second half but also towards the end of the first half.

"They really stretched us," he told TNT. "You have to say they were a very good side."

— Reuters

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BUSINESS

SHORTTAKES

Domestic demand, foreign interest support Oman hospitality outlook

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, MAR 8

Oman's hospitality sector is showing steady resilience, with domestic tourism continuing to anchor occupancy while growing international interest — particularly from Europe — supporting a firmer outlook for resorts and hotels, according to a resort operator in the Wilayat of Mirbat in Dhofar Governorate.

Omar Emteir, investor and chief executive of Roushan Resort, said that domestic travellers remain the main driver of demand, especially on weekends, public holidays and during the winter season, when local guests account for the majority of short leisure stays.

He said weekend occupancy typically reaches 80 to 95 per cent, while seafront resorts can see bookings rise to full capacity during peak periods.

Domestic travellers usually book one- to two-night stays and are highly responsive to promotional offers, he said. Many favour sea-view rooms and room-only packages, reflecting demand for quick seaside breaks rather than longer, fully bundled holidays.

A beachfront boutique property located in the coastal town of Mirbat, Roushan Resort comprises about 22 sea-oriented bungalows arranged around two outdoor pools and offers direct access to the beach and nearby coral reefs.

Renovated and brought under new management in 2025, the resort provides accommodation ranging from sea-view bungalows to hostel-style rooms, alongside amenities such as a restaurant and a dive centre.

Emteir said international arrivals have strengthened over the past six months, with growing demand from Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and India. Foreign guests typically stay longer — from three to 14 nights — and often extend their stay if satisfied with the destination and property.

He said overseas visitors tend to be more value-oriented than price-driven. Rather than focusing only on room rates, they pay closer attention to hotel ratings on online travel platforms, cleanliness standards, facilities and location. Meal-inclusive offers, especially breakfast and half-board packages, remain the most popular among these travellers.

Location also remains central to booking behaviour. Emteir said seaside hotels and properties with direct beach access continue to attract the strongest demand, particularly during the winter tourism season when Oman's climate appeals to European visitors. He described the Sultanate of Oman's position as strengthening as a preferred winter destination.

Occupancy patterns remain predictable across the week. Weekend and public-holiday demand is strongest, while weekday occupancy generally ranges between 50 and 70 per cent depending on seasonality and broader market conditions.

Emteir also pointed to the salary cycle in Oman as a recurring demand factor, with the first week after salary disbursement often producing a noticeable rise in weekend bookings.

On market sentiment, Emteir said the sector remains optimistic but watchful.

He noted that global geopolitical developments can temporarily slow new bookings, particularly among organised European travel groups seeking clearer cancellation terms and reassurance over safety and stability.

However, he said these responses are usually precautionary and short term, rather than signs of weakening underlying demand.

He added that day-to-day booking activity remains active, with individual leisure travellers continuing to confirm reservations and some guests already in Oman extending their stays. In his view, operators that maintain strong service standards, transparent communication and flexible booking policies are better positioned to navigate uncertainty successfully.

Quarantine project to boost Oman's biosecurity

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, MAR 8

OMAN has unveiled plans to strengthen national biosecurity infrastructure around livestock resources through the establishment of a network of Animal Quarantine Centres (AQCs) catering to the needs of the entire country.

As many as three such centres are envisioned for development and operation in the Sultanate of Oman. Two of these are greenfield facilities to be set up at Al Suwaiq and Al Buraimi, while the third — an existing centre in Raysut (Salalah) — is proposed to be modernised and expanded.

Significantly, the initiative will be undertaken by the private sector via the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) route overseen by the Ministry of Finance.

The competent authority representing the government is the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, which is a principal stakeholder in the development of the country's biosecurity infrastructure.

"This initiative represents a critical step in modernising the Sultanate of Oman's livestock management systems, reducing public health risks and supporting the Sultanate of Oman's ambition to become a regional hub for livestock trade and re-export", the Ministry of Finance explained.

Interested companies have until March 28, 2026, to respond to a Request for Qualifications (RfQ) issued recently by the Ministry.

The successful bidder will receive the mandate to undertake the project on a 'Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Maintain'

This initiative represents a critical step in modernising the Sultanate of Oman's livestock management systems, reducing public health risks and supporting the Sultanate of Oman's ambition to become a regional hub for livestock trade and re-export.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE



Modern Animal Quarantine Centres will be established at Raysut (Salalah), Al Suwaiq and Al Buraimi.

(DBFOM) basis, underpinned by a concession to operate and maintain the network for 30 years.

As part of its remit, the new Project Company will replace the existing Animal Quarantine Centre at Raysut (adjacent to the Port of Salalah) with a modern, biosecure centre.

In addition, a new greenfield facility will be developed at Al Suwaiq in place of the existing Sa'al centre to serve the entire Oman's northern coastal region.

At Al Buraimi, a new land border-based quarantine facility will be set up near the UAE border to manage livestock movements entering the Sultanate of Oman by road, with a particular focus on camel quarantine.

Importantly, the project aims to strengthen Oman's biosecurity and disease-control capacity through modern, internationally compliant quarantine infrastructure that prevents the spread of transboundary animal diseases. It also seeks to enhance

food security and public health through safer livestock import procedures, modernise existing quarantine facilities and support Oman's position as a regional livestock trade and re-export hub by improving quarantine efficiency and aligning with GCC biosecurity standards.

Furthermore, private sector participation under the PPP model is expected to attract investment into Oman's agriculture and biosecurity sectors while ensuring long-term value for money through performance-based management and efficient operations.

The partnership will also support job creation and skills development for Omani nationals, particularly in veterinary and facility management roles, while promoting environmentally sustainable practices and strengthening governance through coordinated oversight among relevant government authorities.

Aquaculture output to reach 9,240 tonnes

MUSCAT: Aquaculture production in the Sultanate of Oman is projected to reach around 9,240 tonnes in 2025, marking a 67.7 per cent increase compared with 2024, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The total value of production is expected to exceed RO 20.3 million, reflecting a 63.7 per cent rise year-on-year as the sector expands in line with national food security and economic diversification goals.

Dr Issa bin Mohammed al Farsi, Director of the Aquaculture Development Department at the ministry, said the main farmed species in Oman include white-legged shrimp and European cobia, followed by tilapia, Omani abalone and rock oysters.

He noted that the ministry has adopted a comprehensive strategy to develop a competitive and sustainable aquaculture sector aligned with the environmental, social and economic priorities of the Sultanate of Oman.

The strategy is built on four key pillars: adherence to high international quality



The total value of production is expected to exceed RO 20.3 million, reflecting a 63.7 per cent rise year-on-year.

standards, sustainability and environmental responsibility, engagement with local communities and strengthening national food security.

These efforts support the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to diversify income sources and expand the contribution of non-oil sectors to the national economy. Al Farsi added that the ministry is also encouraging

entrepreneurship in integrated aquaculture systems that combine fish farming with crop cultivation, helping to conserve water resources and reduce environmental emissions.

To support investors and young entrepreneurs, financing packages covering up to 80 per cent of project costs are available through the Development Bank and other supporting institutions.

In addition, innovation

initiatives such as the "Propose Your Project" platform have been launched to help entrepreneurs develop viable aquaculture ventures.

Omani farmed fish products are increasingly targeting major international markets, including the European Union, China, Korea and Russia, alongside Gulf and Arab markets.

The ministry said strict quality standards are maintained through the application of the Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) certification system and regular laboratory testing conducted by the Food Quality and Safety Centre to ensure product safety and compliance with global requirements.

Meanwhile, construction began in February on a major white-legged shrimp farming project in the Wilayat of Shinas in Al Batinah North Governorate.

The RO 23.5 million project, spread across 15 hectares, is expected to produce around 7,500 tonnes annually once operational, making it one of the largest aquaculture developments in the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The limited time offer is valid until April 8, 2026

Changan UNI range welcomes Ramadhan with exclusive ownership benefits

MUSCAT: Changan Oman, represented by Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC (AGAE), has announced a special Ramadhan retail campaign across its premium UNI Series, providing customers with enhanced ownership benefits on selected models. The limited time offer is valid until April 8, 2026 and is applicable exclusively to retail customers purchasing eligible vehicles from authorised Changan showrooms.

The Ramadhan offer covers the UNI-K, UNI-S, UNI-V and UNI-T, reflecting Changan’s commitment to delivering advanced design, intelligent technology and long-term ownership value within the mid-premium automotive segment.

The campaign has been structured to provide customers with a comprehensive package of benefits that enhance convenience, protection and peace of mind throughout the ownership journey.

The models are available with attractive EMI options, making ownership more accessible for customers across the Sultanate of Oman. EMI is calculated based on a 20% down payment over a six-year loan tenure and is subject to bank credit approval.

RAMADHAN OFFER BENEFITS FOR UNI SERIES Customers purchasing eligible UNI models during the campaign period will receive:

- Free first-year vehicle registration for private (yellow plate) registration. Customers opting for commercial (red plate) registration will pay the applicable difference.
- Free first-year comprehensive insurance valid in Oman and the UAE for private registration.
- Assured free service package of 5 years or 105,000 km for UNI-K, UNI-S and UNI-V model variants, covering periodic maintenance services only and excluding wear and tear components.
- Assured gifts including complimentary window tinting and ceramic paint protection, applied at authorised Changan service centres.
- 5 per cent VAT included within the vehicle price during the offer period. No cash alternative or discount is applicable.
- Manufacturer’s warranty of 6 years with unlimited mileage on 2025 and 2026 UNI Series models, subject to standard manufacturer terms and conditions.

Fleet, government, taxi, driving school and key account purchases are not eligible under this retail promotion. Changan’s UNI Series represents the brand’s most progressive and technology-driven line-up. The UNI-K delivers a premium SUV experience with powerful turbocharged performance, refined interior comfort and advanced driver assistance features suited to long-distance and family travel.

Meethaq launches special offer for credit cards holders

MUSCAT: In line with its strategy to deliver enhanced value to customers and credit card holders, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat has announced a special promotional offer on its credit cards.

The campaign includes the joining fee reversal for the first year, valid until June 30, 2026.

The initiative reinforces Meethaq’s commitment to providing exceptional banking solutions. To benefit from the offer, customers are required to activate their credit cards within 45 days of issuance and use the card at any of their preferred shopping destinations for transactions.

Meethaq Islamic Banking offers a wide range of credit cards designed to meet the diverse needs of customers.

These include the Meethaq Lulu



The initiative reinforces Meethaq’s commitment to providing exceptional banking solutions.

Credit Card, Visa Platinum Credit Card, Visa Gold Credit Card and Hafawa Visa Signature Credit Card.

Cardholders can enjoy the convenience of paying for their purchases over 12 months at

Save big on Kia SUV range this Ramadhan in Oman

THE holy month of Ramadhan is a season of reflection, generosity and new beginnings. Embracing this spirit, Kia is redefining the modern driving experience in the Sultanate of Oman with a celebration of value that is as bold as its vehicles.

From significant cash savings to assured luxury prizes, Kia is making this Ramadhan an unforgettable milestone for motorists by taking care of the VAT on us (5%) by adjusting the amount against your down payment, which also includes free registration and insurance an Assured Scratch & Win for 100 Fifa World Cup Tickets and the chance to also win service packages of up to 50,000 and 100,000 km.

To ensure a seamless start to your journey furthermore, existing Kia owners receive exclusive appreciation through a Trade-in Bonus and premium 3M Window Tints, making this the best time to upgrade.

For those who demand the freedom to do more, the Kia Sportage L redefines utility with its “Make Space for Adventure” philosophy, now available with massive Ramadhan savings of up to RO 2,650.

This iteration of the beloved Sportage features a significantly longer wheelbase of 2,755 mm and a massive 543-litre luggage compartment, catering perfectly to five-member families.

The Sportage L offers a choice of two high-performance turbocharged engines: a 2.0T engine churning out 233 HP and a 1.5T engine producing 197 HP. Both come with an 8-speed Shift-by-Wire transmission and equipped with AWD functionality for robust performance on uneven terrains.

The cabin is a showcase of innovation, featuring a dual 12.3-inch integrated cluster and infotainment system, premium leather-fitted interiors and a comprehensive Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS)



Kia is redefining the modern driving experience in the Sultanate of Oman.

that includes Forward Collision Avoidance and Blind-Spot Collision Warning.

Moving into the realm of executive city driving, the Kia Seltos is redefining the compact SUV segment with savings of up to RO 625.

Addressing the challenges of narrow roads and heavy traffic with ease, the Seltos provides a commanding view of the road from its high SUV seating position, making it remarkably easy to navigate through winding city streets or secure a spot in crowded mall parking lots.

Under the hood, the Seltos is powered by a refined 1.4L Turbo engine producing 138 hp, paired with a smooth 7 DCT transmission to deliver an impressive fuel efficiency of 17 km/litre.

Its bold exterior features sharp muscular creases, 17-inch alloy wheels and a new diamond-pattern radiator grille. Inside, the cabin is a sanctuary of comfort, offering a five-seater layout with ventilated seats, a panoramic sunroof and a 429-litre boot.

Connectivity is woven into the experience

via an 8-inch display audio system, while safety is bolstered by Smart Key Entry, an electronic parking brake and Parking Distance Warning (PDW) with front and back sensors.

Rounding out the lineup, the Kia Sonet continues to serve as a cornerstone for those seeking an efficient urban lifestyle, now with savings of up to RO 750.

Specifically designed to meet the needs of families and college-goers, the Sonet redefines value and functionality without compromising on style. Powered by a 1.5L four-cylinder engine producing 114 hp to offer a highly competitive fuel efficiency of 17.5 km/litre.

Inside, the Sonet is an absolute delight, featuring an 8-inch audio display with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, alongside a luggage capacity of 392 litres.

Safety is integrated into the experience, with an advanced anti-lock braking system, Electronic Stability Program (ESP), and ISOFIX child-seat anchoring points ensuring peace of mind for all passengers.

MERCURÉ EVENTS HOSTS INTL WOMEN’S DAY CELEBRATION

MUSCAT: Mercuré Events recently orchestrated a landmark event in honour of International Women’s Day, uniting influential women leaders, visionary entrepreneurs and inspiring individuals to champion women’s empowerment, solidarity and celebrate achievements.

The occasion featured inspiring talks by some of the eminent women of Oman narrating their life experiences and how with perseverance, determination and dedication women can triumph with examples of their own journey of grit and determination.

The emphasis on women fostering a vibrant atmosphere of connection and collaboration resonated with one & all.

Deepti Ruparel-Chief Executive Officer At Mercuré Events stated, “we are committed to catalysing women’s empowerment and



The occasion featured inspiring talks by some of the eminent women of Oman.

driving inclusive growth. This celebration has reinforced our resolve to nurture talent and foster opportunities for women to flourish”.

We extend our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his visionary leadership and dedication in fostering a community where every individual feels safe.

Our chief guest, speakers, presenters, esteemed guests and team for contributing to this resounding success. Together, we reaffirm our dedication to shaping a more equitable future together

The theme of this year’s IWD, “ Give to Gain” was very evident as the meeting came to a close with the participants committing to action oriented mutual support, collaboration and commitment to build a strong community of able women.

SHORTTAKES



There is a modest rise in oil production levels in Oman.

Oman oil exports rise to 26.6 million barrels

MUSCAT: Oman's oil exports rose by about 3 per cent by the end of January 2026, reaching 26.6 million barrels compared with 25.82 million barrels during the same period in 2025, according to preliminary data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Despite the increase in export volumes, the average price of Omani crude declined by 9.3 per cent to \$64.4 per barrel, compared with \$71 per barrel in the corresponding period last year.

The data also showed a modest rise in oil production levels. Average daily production increased by 2.2 per cent to around 1.024 million barrels per day by the end of January 2026, compared with 1.002 million barrels per day a year earlier.

Total oil production in Oman reached 31.75 million barrels during the first month of the year, representing a 3.7 per cent increase from 30.61 million barrels recorded in 2025. — ONA

12 licences issued for operating marine piers



The licences were granted after companies met the requirements of the regulations governing the establishment, management and operation of piers.

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology issued 12 licences to 11 companies last year for the management and operation of marine piers for tourism and commercial activities outside ports, as part of efforts to regulate the sector and enhance maritime safety standards.

The licences were granted after companies met the requirements of the regulations governing the establishment, management and operation of marine piers outside ports.

The initiative aims to improve service quality, strengthen maritime safety compliance and support the development of Oman's logistics and maritime sectors.

Laila bint Ali al Batashi, Director of the Ports and Marine Docks Department at the ministry, said seven licences

were issued for tourism piers in the governorates of Muscat, Dhofar, Musandam and Al Batinah South. Five licences were granted for commercial piers located in Al Sharqiyah South and Musandam.

The regulatory framework provides three types of licences. The first is a conditional preliminary approval valid for one year, allowing investors

to complete procedures and secure approvals from relevant authorities before beginning construction.

Once all approvals and engineering designs are finalised, investors may apply for a construction permit.

During 2026, five construction permits were issued for marine piers in the wilayats of Taqah, Salalah, Jaalan Bani Bu Ali,

Barka and Al Duqm.

A third category covers management and operation licences, which are issued annually for commercial and tourism piers. Last year, five licences were granted for commercial piers in Sur and Khasab, with lengths ranging from 176 metres to 759 metres, while seven tourism pier licences were issued in Muscat, Dibba and Salalah, with lengths between 250 metres and 2,286 metres.

Al Batashi noted that licence holders must comply with maritime laws and safety regulations, secure insurance coverage for facilities and obtain prior approval for any expansion works.

Operators are also required to report incidents immediately and implement approved safety, security and maintenance plans. — ONA

APSR issues risk management rules for utilities

MUSCAT: The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) has issued two new regulations aimed at strengthening risk management and business continuity across the electricity, water and wastewater sectors in the Sultanate of Oman.

The regulations require licensed companies to adopt structured risk management frameworks to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of essential services under a range of circumstances, including emergencies, natural disasters, cyber threats and operational disruptions.

Under the new rules, licensees



Licensees must establish comprehensive risk management.

must establish comprehensive risk management and business continuity systems within six months of the regulations coming into effect. Companies are also required to prepare

detailed risk mitigation plans, regularly test and update these plans; and submit annual reports to the Authority outlining risk assessments, exercise outcomes and improvements made.

The regulations place strong emphasis on governance and compliance. Licensed operators must allocate adequate technical and administrative resources for risk management, cooperate fully with regulatory audits and ensure strict adherence to the prescribed standards.

Penalties of up to RO 500,000 may be imposed for violations, with fines doubled in the case of repeat offences. — ONA

Oman, Rostock University sign MoU on circular economy

BERLIN: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR), has signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Rostock in Germany to strengthen cooperation in sustainable waste management and the development of circular economy solutions.

The agreement forms part of APSR's efforts to benefit from international expertise in resource management and maximise the economic value of waste, supporting Oman's transition towards circular economic models and greater environmental sustainability.

The MoU was signed by Hassan bin Mohammed al Lawati, Director-General of Economic Regulation and Markets at APSR, and Professor Elisabeth, Rector of the University of Rostock.

The partnership aims to advance scientific and technical cooperation in developing modern waste management models based on global best practices.

Areas of focus include raising environmental awareness, encouraging waste segregation at source,



The MoU was signed by Hassan bin Mohammed al Lawati, Director-General of Economic Regulation and Markets at APSR, and Professor Elisabeth, Rector of the University of Rostock.

improving recycling efficiency, reducing dependence on landfills and converting waste into economically valuable resources.

The agreement also seeks to strengthen institutional capabilities within APSR by developing human resources and regulatory frameworks related to the waste management sector.

Drawing on Germany's extensive experience, the collaboration will support the formulation of modern regulatory policies and strategies aimed at improving efficiency and environmental performance in Oman's waste sector.

As part of the programme surrounding the signing, the Omani delegation visited research laboratories and facilities at the University of Rostock, as well as operational sites of a waste management company in the city.

The visits showcased advanced technologies and practical applications in waste treatment and resource recovery.

Specialised discussions were also held to explore opportunities for joint research and technical cooperation in developing innovative solutions that support the circular economy. — ONA

ABRAJ

ENERGY SERVICES SAOG

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

The Board of Directors is pleased to welcome the Shareholders to the eighth Annual General Meeting of ABRAJ Energy Services SAOG- (ABRAJ) and to present the Annual Report for the financial

year ended 31st December 2025.

ABRAJ had, sustainably, performed well throughout 2025, with good steady results from the Drilling and workover services and a remarkable contribution from the Cementing and Well Services. ABRAJ has successfully managed to grow outside Oman by expanding its operations in Alwafra Joint Operations for the provision of drilling rigs in Kuwait, reflecting its commitment to operational efficiency and project execution excellence. This achievement not only strengthens ABRAJ's foothold in the regional market but also enhances its reputation as a reliable and capable service provider. With a solid track record and a growing presence, ABRAJ is well-positioned to sustain its current growth trajectory and explore further expansion opportunities in the industry.

ABRAJ is focused on providing services around Oil and Gas Wells, during and post wells construction. From building a wider service portfolio, ABRAJ now focuses on strategic top-tier services coupled with strong operational efficiency to realize maximum financial returns and sustainable growth. ABRAJ continues to benefit from the strength of long-term contracts in generating sufficient cash flow for growth.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to expresses our sincere and deep gratitude to the vision and wise great leadership of the country's leader for maintaining sustainable growth and prosperity of the Omani Economy. ABRAJ Board also wishes to place on record its thanks and gratitude to the Ministry of Oil & Gas, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry of Manpower, and the Financial Services Authority for their guidance and support. ABRAJ Board also would like to appreciate and thank you for the valuable support and guidance from the Shareholders, Bankers, and Suppliers. The Board thanks the Management team and all ABRAJ employees for their dedication and commitment to meeting challenging situations.

Ayad bin Ali Al Balushi
Chairman of the Board

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

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	2025 ₹'000	2024 ₹'000
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property and equipment	189,737	201,173
Intangible assets	147	173
Right-of-use assets	3,020	4,081
Contract fulfillment cost	95	68
Capex advances	13,614	982
	206,613	208,477
Current assets		
Inventories	27,136	28,416
Trade receivables	40,719	40,135
Advances, prepayments, and other receivables	3,012	2,816
Contract fulfillment cost	160	25
Cash and cash equivalents	7,050	5,473
	78,077	76,865
	284,690	283,342
Total assets		
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Share capital	77,020	77,020
Treasury shares	(65)	-
Reserve on trading of treasury shares	(90)	-
Legal reserve	14,172	12,405
Cash flow hedge reserve	(360)	-
Retained earnings	55,492	56,895
	146,169	146,320
Total equity		
Non-current liabilities		
Term loans	71,993	74,017
Contract liabilities	1,651	1,058
Derivative financial instruments	304	-
Employees' end of services benefits	2,215	2,398
Lease liabilities	2,343	3,178
Deferred tax liabilities	2,532	3,238
	81,038	83,889
Current liabilities		
Trade payables	14,384	16,459
Term loans	17,060	16,801
Short term loan	10,000	-
Contract liabilities	1,193	660
Lease liabilities	822	1,012
Other payables	8,537	14,453
Derivative financial instruments	120	-
Income tax payable	5,367	3,748
	57,483	53,133
	138,521	137,022
Total liabilities		
Total equity and liabilities	284,690	283,342

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

	2025 ₹'000	2024 ₹'000
Revenue	147,188	151,646
Cost of revenue	(111,028)	(113,666)
Gross profit	36,160	37,980
General and administrative expenses	(9,132)	(10,262)
Other income	150	801
Impairment of property and equipment	(420)	(2,706)
Allowance for expected credit loss on trade receivables	(2)	(16)
Operating profit	26,756	25,797
Finance costs	(6,074)	(5,966)
Finance income	142	128
Net finance costs	(5,932)	(5,838)
Profit before tax	20,824	19,959
Income tax expense	(3,154)	(3,089)
PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	17,670	16,870
Other comprehensive income		
<i>Items that may be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods (net of tax):</i>		
Net loss on cash flow hedges	(360)	-
Other comprehensive loss for the year	(360)	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	17,310	16,870
Earnings per share		
Basic and diluted earnings per share - ₹	0.023	0.022

OPINION

The illusion of control in executive decision-making



KAMLA AL RAHBI

The writer is a leadership and business strategist focused on decision-making, organisational clarity, and cognitive frameworks in complex environments

THERE is a particular kind of confidence that develops in experienced leaders. It does not arrive suddenly. It builds quietly over years of decisions that worked, strategies that held and teams that followed. By the time a leader reaches the senior executive level, this confidence has become something else entirely, it has become the unquestioned belief that they are in control. This belief is, in most cases, an illusion. Not because leaders are incompetent. Not because organisations are chaotic. But because the nature of control in complex systems is fundamentally different from what the human mind assumes it to be. Control, as most executives understand it, is linear: input leads to output, decision leads to result, strategy leads to performance. In reality, executive decision-making operates inside systems that are non-linear, adaptive and deeply influenced by forces that no individual — regardless of title or experience — can fully see or govern. Consider what happens inside an organisation after a major strategic decision is announced. The formal decision is made at the top. But the actual outcome is shaped by how middle managers interpret it, how frontline employees respond to it, how clients react to the signals it sends and how competitors adjust their own strategies in response. The executive who made the decision controls the announcement. They control very little else. This is not a failure of leadership. It is a structural reality that most leadership

frameworks refuse to acknowledge directly. We design organisational hierarchies around the premise of control — that authority at the top translates into directed outcomes at every level. And for a time, in stable environments, this premise holds well enough to seem true. But stability is not permanence. It is simply the absence of visible disruption. What makes the illusion of control particularly damaging is not that it exists, but that it is systematically reinforced. Executives receive filtered information — summarised, softened and often unconsciously shaped to match what the organisation believes leadership wants to hear. They operate in meetings where dissent is rare and agreement is the norm. They read reports that measure what is measurable, which is rarely what is most important. Over time, the gap between the executive's mental model of the organisation and the organisation's actual condition grows wider invisibly, gradually and without alarm. The consequences are predictable, even if the timing is not. Decisions are made based on assumptions that stopped being accurate months or years earlier. Risks are assessed against frameworks built for yesterday's environment. Opportunities are missed because the signals that would reveal them do not survive the journey upward through the hierarchy. The solution is not humility as a virtue. It is humility as a structural design principle. Organisations that make better decisions over time are not led by leaders who know more — they are led by leaders who have deliberately

Control, as most executives understand it, is linear: input leads to output, decision leads to result, strategy leads to performance. In reality, executive decision-making operates inside systems that are non-linear, adaptive and deeply influenced by forces that no individual — regardless of title or experience — can fully see or govern.

built systems that expose what they do not know. They create channels for unfiltered information. They reward the people who bring problems forward rather than the people who suppress them. They test their assumptions actively rather than defending them instinctively. This kind of leadership requires something that is genuinely difficult for high-achieving executives: the willingness to sit with uncertainty without immediately resolving it into a decision. To hold a question open long enough to actually understand it. To treat the discomfort of not knowing as information rather than as a problem to be managed. In the Gulf context specifically, where Vision-driven transformation is creating pressure to demonstrate progress, the temptation to project control is acute. Leaders are expected to project confidence, to communicate direction, to inspire action. All of this is legitimate. But there is a difference between the confidence that comes from genuine strategic clarity and the confidence that comes from refusing to examine the limits of what one knows. The executives who will lead most effectively through this period of transformation are not those who control more. They are those who have learned to distinguish between the decisions that are genuinely theirs to make and the outcomes that belong to the system — and who have built organisations intelligent enough to navigate both. Control is not the goal of effective leadership. Judgment is.

MARKETS’ IRAN BASE CASE LOOKS LIKE A BEST CASE

GEORGE HAY

What endgame for Iran are investors pricing in? Judging by moves in financial markets since US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched the bombing campaign that killed Iranian SupremeLeader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday, they seem to expect a swift end to the conflict. Yet that begs the question of what happens afterwards. There's a risk that investors are confusing base-case and best-case scenarios. There are many possible outcomes in Iran. One scenario is that the current government falls apart following the death of scores of senior leaders. A second option is that the Islamic Republic limps on in roughly its current form. Or Iran could embrace a more open and democratic form of government, reintegrating its economy with the world and encouraging Washington to phase out sanctions. The first two scenarios could see oil prices spiking above \$100 a barrel, from around \$87 today, Capital Economics reckons. That's because internal turmoil would disrupt Iran's daily output exceeding 3 million barrels, while an outcome where the hardline Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) keeps its grip on power would probably involve Tehran continuing to threaten tankers that sail through the Strait of Hormuz. Only the last scenario would lead to increased Iranian oil production, an economic recovery and prices of the black stuff falling to \$50 a barrel over time. The relative calm in financial and commodities markets suggests investors expect a swift end to the conflict and to disruption, plus a high probability of a benign scenario thereafter. Despite the recent jump, oil prices remain far below the \$130 a barrel level they approached following Russia's war in Ukraine four years ago. European gas prices have jumped 60% to 52 euros per megawatt-hour, way below the 100 euros per MWh at which they consistently traded in 2022. Meanwhile, gas prices for delivery a few years hence have hardly budged, implying a short interruption. Washington claimed on Thursday it had destroyed over 60% of Tehran's missiles and launchers, plus 30 of its ships. Trump also asserted that Iran wanted talks, that the US would have to be involved in choosing the next leader of Iran and IRGC ally Mojtaba Khamenei, the late leader's hardline son, was an unlikely choice as a successor. Still, a fifth of the world's oil supply is currently trapped behind the Strait of Hormuz. — Reuters

Strategic logistics and geopolitical hub: Al Duqm

AL DUQM, located on the southeastern coast of Oman, is a deep-water port facing the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean rather than being inside the Strait of Hormuz or the Red Sea. Al Duqm is strategically located in the main east-west shipping lane between Asia and Europe. It is perfectly positioned to serve both the Eastern and Western corridors from a central position in the Indian Ocean. As it lies outside the Strait of Hormuz, yet close to the Gulf energy routes, it is valuable for energy supplies, general trade and naval access, making it attractive to partners such as India, the US, the UK and other countries. One of the key pillars of the Oman Vision 2040 diversification strategy is the deliberate development of Al Duqm as a deep-water port and industrial hub outside the Strait of Hormuz. Large, growing markets in Africa, India and the Gulf Cooperation Council are served by Al Duqm, a secure gateway connecting the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. It is well-positioned to become a dependable alternative to hubs that rely on chokepoints. Al Duqm offers geostrategic depth and diversification at the system level, with access to the Indian Ocean through naval and logistic lines. Al Duqm is not an alternative to the Strait of Hormuz for cargo starting or ending in the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, etc, where ships inside the Gulf basin must still cross the Strait of Hormuz. The strategic value lies in providing firms and governments with the option to locate hubs, refineries, storage and transshipment facilities so that, in the future, they may move directly over blue-water routes rather than through the narrow Gulf Passage.



Al Duqm is strategically located in the main east-west shipping lane between Asia and Europe.

It is an option for projects and shipping services to be based outside the Gulf. On March 1-3, 2026, Al Duqm was under several drone attacks in the ongoing US-Israel and Iran war. During the drone attacks, some worker accommodations were struck, a nearby tanker off the coast of Oman was damaged and fuel storage tanks and bunkering facilities were also under threat. Al Duqm and Salalah have temporarily suspended certain operations, but they can still help during a crisis, as the damage was limited. In this volatile region, where the Strait of Hormuz and parts of the Red Sea are highly risky, Al Duqm and Salalah provide shipping lines, naval forces and energy companies with support outside the Gulf bottleneck amidst geopolitical escalations, heightened security concerns and rising insurance costs. The Omani authorities have reported that core operations have resumed since the drone attacks.

Due to its political neutrality and rapid recovery, Al Duqm is an alternative hub likely to be both attacked and relied upon, as demonstrated by the recent increase in disruptions. Given the recent drone attack on Al Duqm during the US-Iran war, it is evident that direct security risks can impair port performance and regional connectivity if risks are not effectively managed. Al Duqm's expansion plans, Oman's long-standing foreign policy and its diversification agenda are interrelated, emphasising neutrality, de-escalation and balanced relations with other countries. A major source of competitive advantage for this port is this diplomatic approach, particularly in a region marked by sanctions, armed conflict and trade disruptions. In reality, neutrality should be seen less as a defence against geopolitical pressure and more as a governance strategy that requires constant modification and enforcement. As the US-Israel and Iran war deepens, Al Duqm is uniquely positioned as a diplomatic and logistics safety net for a fragmenting region. Despite drone attacks, operations have resumed at Duqm and other Omani ports. It is plausible that Oman will continue to play a key role in any sustainable architecture for Gulf security and global supply-chain risk management, owing to its robust infrastructural resilience, political neutrality and Muscat's diplomatic position as a covert middleman between Washington and Tehran. From a strategic perspective, Al Duqm is not merely a port in maritime trade; it demonstrates the Oman government's capabilities to leverage ports, diversification and diplomacy to keep crucial routes open amidst ongoing geopolitical upheaval.



DR MYTHILI KOLLURU

The writer is an assistant professor, marketing and management department

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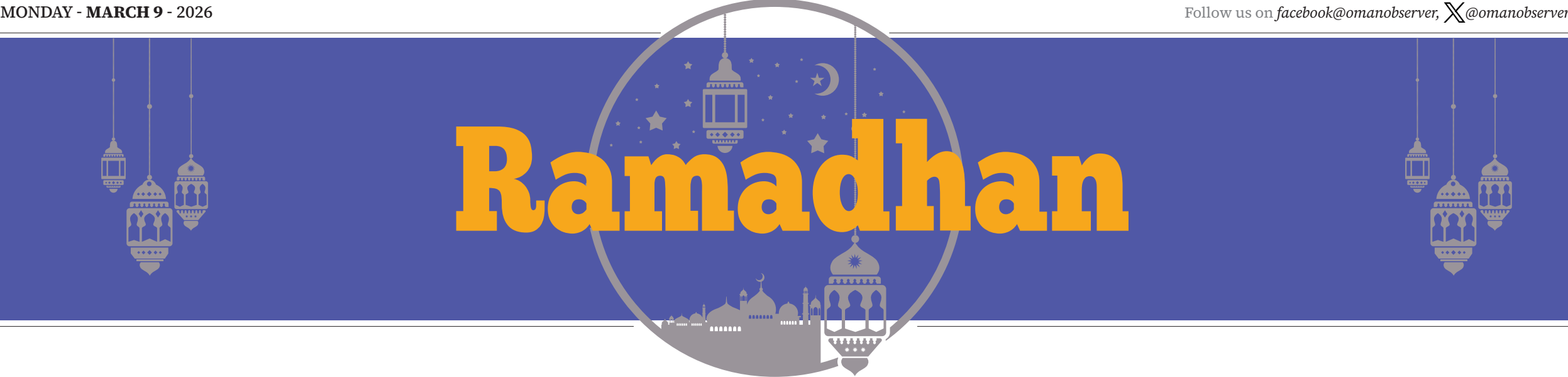
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A C H A L L E N G E F O R M A N Y

CAFFEINE-FREE TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER FAST



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

ALMOST the middle of Ramadhan and some people are still battling out some challenges such as overcoming coffee and tea withdrawal symptoms.

The coffee shop culture has been growing over the last few years with people preferring even to work and conduct meetings from coffeshops. And now they are closed during the day time.

Dr Manal al Zedjali said, “I like coffee. But I don’t drink it during Ramadhan because it causes acidity and it makes you lose sleep. But I have my tea at suhoor because I would have my withdrawal symptoms such as headache during the day and that is not good while I am working”.

Maliha al Zarai aims for the Omani Kahwa at the iftar table.

“I drink kahwa because I need something hot to break the fast”, she explained.

Nasra al Toqi looked at Karak tea and said, “I have not had tea during the whole of Ramadhan until today. Now that I have seen it I must have a cup”.

The health experts will urge you to take it easy with your craving for



tea and coffee during the days of fasting.

Dr Dilip Singvi, Specialist, Internal Medicine, Burjeel Hospital said a concern that must be kept in mind is the fact that after 12 or 13 hours of fast, the stomach is completely empty and acid is produced. Precautions should be taken.

“The best way to open the fast is to start with something light such as dates water and light snacks. So some digestion starts in the stomach and then if they want to take tea they can after 15 to 20 minutes. The precaution to be taken is not to take tea or coffee on an empty stomach. If they do so, it can increase the acidity symptoms such as nausea and

vomiting. Especially patients who have heart diseases, hypertension and diabetes should not take it in empty stomach”.

Symptoms of acidity are an exertion on the body and even the blood pressure can go up, he pointed out. “Most importantly stick to one cup or maximum two cups, not more than that”, he urged.

Cardiologist Dr Mujeeb Ahamed, Burjeel Hospital also noted that it is not advisable to have coffee in empty stomach as it can cause gastric irritation.

“In cardiac perspective if some one is already taking coffee regularly, they can take coffee during the evenings of Ramadhan as their body is already adjusted to that.

But new experience is not good because it can cause increased heart beat and palpitations”, Dr Mujeeb noted.

In fact one had to prepare in advance to handle coffee and tea withdrawals.

Clinical nutritionist at the Ministry of Health, Shabib al Kalbani explained that to overcome caffeine withdrawal symptoms during Ramadhan one has to reduce his/her caffeine intake one to two weeks prior to Ramadhan while simultaneously stay hydrated by taking in sufficient amount of water

and fruits such as watermelon.

“During Ramadhan it is important to refrain from caffeine consumption at suhoor so that circadian rhythms are not disrupted”, he said.

Children and elderly are more at risk of dehydration so for those who do fast it is important to stay hydrated during non fasting hours and limit as much as possible tea/ coffee/soft drinks including sugar free caffeinated types.

Tea and coffee are diuretics. For every cup of coffee at night, experts advice that we should drink two cups of water to prevent daytime fatigue.

The ‘Water-First Rule’ is to be remembered especially if one is trying to fast for the first time. It is important to stay hydrated with water and dates at iftar before reaching for the teapot or aim for the espresso machine.

How can we manage the symptoms?

Light Exercise: A short walk before iftar can help increase circulation and alleviate mild headaches.

Sleep Hygiene: Caffeine late at night can ruin the limited sleep window between Taraweeh and suhoor. So the advice given is to cut off caffeine at least four hours before sleeping.

FATWA

QUESTION & ANSWER



Shaikh
Dr Kahlan
Al Kharousi

QUESTION

Does tooth extraction break the fast?

ANSWER

Tooth extraction does not break the fast, as long as blood, water, or medication used during the procedure is not swallowed.

Assistant Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman

QURAN

VERSE OF THE DAY

{خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ}

He creates man from a drop of semen, yet he is an open opponent

[Surat Al Nahl] — Verse 4

HADITH

A GUIDE FOR THE FAITHFUL

Abu Hurairah narrated that:
The Messenger of Allah said:

“There are two joys for the fasting person: the joy when he breaks his fast and the joy of when he meets his Lord”.

[Sahih al Bukhari]



QARANQASHO TRADITION COMES ALIVE IN BRISBANE



BADRIYA AL BALUSHI

A vibrant celebration of the Qaranqasho tradition brought colour and joy to Brisbane, Australia, as Omani families marked one of Ramadhan’s most cherished customs over the weekend. The event witnessed the spirit of the tradition among children and kept its cultural essence alive — showing that being far from Oman does not mean this beautiful tradition is forgotten.

In the weeks leading up to the gathering, families prepared enthusiastically, planning activities, coordinating decorations and arranging traditional dishes to ensure the celebration reflected the beauty of Qaranqasho.

On the day of the event, homes and the venue were lit with soft fairy lights, Ramadhan decorations, creating a warm and festive atmosphere that welcomed everyone as they arrived.

The celebration also attracted families from other cultures, including Iraqis who joined in wholeheartedly. In Iraq, a similar tradition known as Majeena is celebrated during Ramadhan.

Children quickly became the heart of the celebration.

Dressed in beautiful traditional attire, they filled the space with laughter, songs and excitement.

Their energy set the tone for the evening as they sang Qaranqasho chants, played together and proudly showcased their colourful garments. One of the most memorable moments came when the children began exchanging sweets.

They were so excited for this event



and so happy to share their sweets, offering candies, chocolates and small treats to one another with bright smiles.

The celebration was also rich with flavours.

Families prepared beautiful homemade dishes, filling tables with traditional foods and desserts that brought a taste of home to Brisbane. To make the evening even more special, gifts and giveaways were handed to the children and the mothers, who received them with delight.

Amidst the joyful atmosphere, parents expressed how meaningful the day was for them. Ruqaya al Ramadhani, a mother of three and a PhD student at the University of Queensland, shared her happiness: “I am so happy seeing my kids enjoying this day.

It is an important day of the year and I prepare for it carefully. We mothers also enjoy this day, wear our traditional attire and get excited to see each other”.

Her words reflected the sentiment shared by many families who see Qaranqasho as a bridge connecting their children to their cultural roots.

As the evening came to an end, it was clear that distance from Oman had not dimmed the glow of Qaranqasho. The tradition lived on — celebrated, cherished and lovingly passed down to the next generation.

Through days of preparation, glowing lights, shared dishes and the joyful excitement of children, Omanis in Brisbane created a memorable cultural moment that reaffirmed their connection to their heritage and strengthened bonds across cultures.

RAMADHAN TWEETS



إرم أولاد ثاني

@Erem1997

X.com

Translated from Arabic by Grok

O Allah, I entrust our country to You, so place it under Your protection and guardianship, and You are the best of protectors.

O Allah, safeguard our country from the trials of time, and perpetuate upon us the blessings of security, safety, and stability.



Omani landmarks during the holy month



مريم بنت محمد البلوشية

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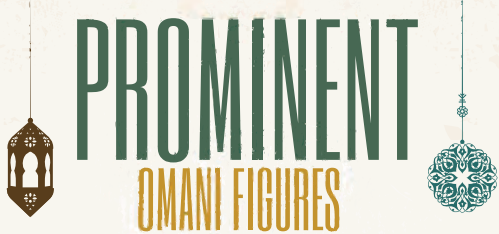
X مسقط

#رمضان_كريم

#حفظ_الله_عُمان



Breathtaking shots of Al Jalali Fort during Ramadhan

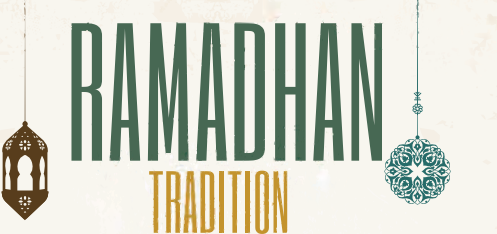


PROMINENT OMANI FIGURES

Who are they?

Jaifar and Abd, the sons of Al Julanda bin Al Mustakbir al Maawali al Azdi

Jaifar and Abd, the sons of Al Julanda bin Al Mustakbir al Maawali al Azdi, were the rulers of Oman during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They received the Prophet’s letter, delivered by the Companion Amr ibn Al Aas around 8 AH (630 CE), inviting them to Islam.



RAMADHAN TRADITION



In Türkiye, a centuries-old tradition sees Ramadhan drummers (Ramazan Davulcusu) walking through the streets before dawn, beating large drums to wake people for suhoor. This practice dates back to the Ottoman era, when drummers played a crucial role in ensuring that families did not miss their pre-dawn meal.



HEALTH TIPS





HEALTHY EATING TIPS FOR RAMADHAN

Avoid eating fried foods, salty foods and high-sugar foods; instead, try incorporating foods from all the major food groups including fruit and vegetables, rice and alternatives, as well as meat and alternatives.

FEATURES

W O R L D W I L D L I F E D A Y



OMAN’S NATURAL HERITAGE IN FOCUS



NAJAH AL RIYAMI

AS the world marked World Wildlife Day on March 3, attention turned once again to the fragile ecosystems and remarkable biodiversity that sustain life across the planet. In Oman, the occasion offers an opportunity not only to celebrate the country’s rich natural heritage but also to reflect on the ongoing efforts to protect species and habitats that define the Sultanate of Oman’s landscapes.

From the deserts of the Empty Quarter (Rub Al Khali) to the coral reefs of the Arabian Sea, Oman hosts a remarkable variety of wildlife. The country’s geography supports desert mammals, migratory birds, marine turtles and rare mountain species that have adapted to some of the most challenging environments in the region.

Among the most celebrated conservation successes is the recovery of the Arabian Oryx, once driven to extinction in the wild. Through breeding and reintroduction programmes led by the Environment Authority (Oman), the species has gradually returned to protected reserves such as the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in central Oman. Once reduced to a handful of individuals globally, the population has grown steadily over the decades through sustained conservation work.

Oman also plays a vital role in the protection of marine wildlife. The country’s coastline is home to one of the world’s largest nesting populations of loggerhead sea turtles, particularly along the beaches of Masirah Island and Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve.

Each year, thousands of turtles return to these shores to lay their eggs, making Oman a globally significant site for turtle conservation.



Beyond iconic species, Oman’s ecosystems support hundreds of birds, reptiles, insects and marine organisms. Coastal wetlands attract migratory birds travelling along the Central Asian flyway, while mountain regions such as Al Jabal Al Akhdhar provide refuge for endemic plants and wildlife adapted to cooler high-altitude conditions.

Conservation in Oman has increasingly focused on balancing environmental protection with sustainable development. Protected areas, wildlife monitoring programmes and environmental awareness campaigns are now key components of national policy.

Government agencies, researchers and local communities are working together to safeguard habitats while promoting responsible tourism and ecological stewardship.

Initiatives such as coral reef monitoring, turtle protection programmes and biodiversity surveys are helping scientists better understand the pressures facing wildlife. Climate change, habitat degradation and human activity continue to pose challenges, making long-term management and public awareness essential.

World Wildlife Day serves as a reminder that conservation is not only about protecting individual species but also about preserving the ecosystems that support them.

In Oman, where natural heritage is deeply tied to cultural identity and traditional livelihoods, safeguarding wildlife is increasingly viewed as an investment in the future.

As the country continues its environmental journey, the message of World Wildlife Day resonates clearly: protecting biodiversity today ensures that Oman’s deserts, mountains and seas remain vibrant landscapes for generations to come.

DESIGN & CULTURE

GABON FASHION DESIGNER BRINGS TRADITIONAL RAFFIA TO PARIS RUNWAYS



Strands of raffia dry outside in the sun at the studio of Gabonese fashion designer Chouchou Lazare, who has made a name for himself using the natural fibres to craft his award-winning garments.

The natural material derived from palm leaves — and traditionally reserved for Gabon’s nobles and village chiefs — gained international attention on the runways of the world’s fashion capital last week.

“This is raffia from Gabon, it’s special, it’s woven very finely, it’s a textile that deserves to be shown”, the self-taught designer said at his workshop in the capital Libreville.

Whether braided, sewn or glued to bustiers or skirts, nearly all of Lazare’s dresses incorporate raffia.

Lazare was only nine years old when he began helping out his mother with her sewing to make ends meet.

He went on to organise his first fashion show in high school and has never received formal training in fashion.

Now in his 50s — he chooses to keep his exact age under wraps — Lazare says he learnt his craft by designing dresses for the two most important women in his life: his mother and grandmother.

“She was very tall; to me, she was like a queen”, he said of his mother.

And in readying his latest collection for the show in Paris on February 28, she remained his inspiration.

“When I prepare my shows, I want to see queens, women who fully own who they are”, he said.

Although the signature material is used throughout his collection, the natural fibres are never dyed.

In the central African country, raffia has special significance.

“It’s a traditional fabric that is part of the spirituality of our country, that speaks to the ancestors”, the designer said.

Like ‘diamonds’

Nowadays no longer just for nobility, raffia features at Gabonese traditional weddings and Indigenous bwiti spiritual ceremonies.

“Raffia represents a natural resource to be preserved, contributing to the influence of Gabonese and African cultural heritage”, the ministry of sustainable tourism and crafts said on social media earlier in the year.

But that does not mean it should only be worn by Gabonese or African people, Lazare said.

“It’s for everyone”, he stressed, checking whether a bunch of the fibres laid out on his balcony were dry.

In 2002, Lazare won first prize for fashion at the Saint-Etienne International Design Biennial in France.

More than two decades later, he presented his creations to French President Emmanuel Macron during a state visit to Gabon in November.

A photograph of Lazare with Macron and Gabon’s President Brice Oligui Nguema now proudly hangs in his workshop, a reminder of “a great moment”, he said.

While raffia may seem a familiar textile to people in Gabon, Lazare said that upon seeing the presidents’ reactions to his creations, “I felt like they were diamonds”.

Glittering in his “diamonds” — a raffia-decorated hat and tunic with a gold suit jacket — Lazare picked up an achievement award in Paris at last week’s Fashion Annual Show, which for more than 25 years has been honouring African designers.

As the president of the Association of Gabonese Stylists and Creators, he is also paving the way for other designers through teaching and mentorship.

Lazare said he hoped to see raffia recognised “as a treasure for Gabon”. — AFP