Follow us on facebook@omanobserver, @omanobserver

ESTABLISHED 1981 — *EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:* ABDULLAH BIN SALIM AL SHUEILI

RAMADHAN 5 - 1447 AH - MONDAY - **FEBRUARY 23** - 2026

OMAN عُمان DAILY

Observer

VOL. 45, NO. 101
PAGES 20 | BAISAS 210

INBRIEF

HIS MAJESTY GREETS BRUNEI, GUYANA AND JAPAN

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent cables of congratulations to Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan of Brunei Darussalam, and President Dr Mohamed Irfan Ali of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, on the occasion of their countries' National Days. His Majesty the Sultan also sent a cable of greetings to Emperor Naruhito of Japan on his country's National Day. In his cables, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes for good health and happiness to the leaders, and for the peoples of their countries continued prosperity, growth and further achievements.

US-IRAN NUCLEAR TALKS IN GENEVA ON THURSDAY

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, has confirmed that negotiations between the United States and Iran will be held in Geneva on Thursday, driven by positive efforts towards finalising the agreement. Earlier, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said he will likely meet with US envoy Steve Witkoff in Geneva, Switzerland, on Thursday, noting that there is still "a good chance" of a diplomatic solution on Tehran's nuclear ambition. Araqchi made the comments during an interview on CBS News' "Face the Nation" as US President Donald Trump considers strikes on Iran. "If the US attacks us, then we have every right to defend ourselves," Araghchi said, alluding to American interests in the region as potential targets. Still, he said, "there is a good chance to have a diplomatic solution".

Royal Decree establishes Embassy in Belarus

MUSCAT: *His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Sunday issued two Royal Decrees.*

Royal Decree No (33/2026) on establishing the Sultanate of Oman's Embassy in the Republic of Belarus.

Article (1) states that the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman shall be established in the Republic of Belarus.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No (34/2026) on ratifying an agreement of cooperation between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Republic of Turkiye in the fields of health and medical sciences, signed in Ankara on November 28, 2024.

Article (1) ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. ***— ONA***

Nations flay remarks on Occupied Territories

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN voiced strong condemnation of the statement made by the US ambassador to Israel, which implies an illegitimate acceptance of the imposition of control over Arab lands including the occupied Palestinian territories.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Sunday, the Sultanate of Oman reaffirmed its categorical rejection of such statements, which violate international law and the Charter of the United Nations, undermine peace prospects and endanger security and stability in the region. The Foreign Ministry reiterated the Sultanate of Oman's firm stance in support of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, the establishment of their independent state on the June 4, 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the end of the occupation of all Arab territories.

A Palestinian sits in the debris of the Al Hasayna Mosque as she recites from a copy of the Quran, during the holy month of Ramadhan in western Gaza City on Sunday. ***— AFP***

Meanwhile, a coalition of Arab and Islamic countries, including the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Qatar, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Türkiye, the State of Palestine, and the State of Kuwait, alongside the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC),

TURN TO P2

SEA TURTLE MONITORING PROJECT IMPLEMENTED IN MASIRAH ISLAND

MASIRAH: *The Environment Department in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate is implementing a field project to study sea turtles in the Wilayat of Masirah. The project focuses on measuring the success rate of olive ridley turtle nests at nesting and hatching sites on Masirah Island.*

The project covers the season of olive ridley turtle nesting from February to May, along nesting beaches in the southern part of Masirah Island. It also includes the loggerhead turtle season, which extends from May to October every year. The survey includes monitoring a stretch of 84 kilometres along the island's coastline. The survey is conducted in two shifts daily: The first is a morning shift that includes documenting turtle tracks and nests, releasing stray turtles back into the sea and registering deaths, if any. The second is a night shift that includes monitoring actual nesting activity, tagging turtles and monitoring the beaches. — ONA

The survey includes monitoring a stretch of 84 kilometres along the island's coastline. — ONA

Traffic toll prompts call for delivery rider safety code

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, FEB 22

Experts and observers are calling for stricter safety measures, mandatory protective gear and company accountability to curb risky riding and protect lives on the road.

A speeding delivery bike weaving through traffic with a heavily loaded rear rack is now a familiar sight on busy streets. For many motorists, the relief often comes when they manage to avoid a sudden encounter with one of these fast-moving vehicles that could easily lead to damage or injury.

Behind the rush is a race against time. Delivery riders often operate under strict deadlines set by companies, where delays can mean salary deductions, reduced incentives or even the loss of a job. The pressure to deliver quickly can push riders to take risks on the road, sometimes leading to serious — and often fatal — accidents.

According to reports from the Royal Oman Police, accidents involving motorcycles, particularly delivery bikes, have been increasing. In many cases, riders suffer severe injuries or fatalities despite wearing safety gear, which can only reduce — not eliminate — the impact of high-speed crashes.

Official figures show that in 2024, Oman recorded 586 deaths and 1,936 injuries from 1,854 traffic accidents. A noticeable number of those incidents involved delivery riders. Data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information also shows that 135,028 new driving licences were issued in 2023, including licences for two-wheelers.

Although strict procedures are in place for obtaining driving licences, accidents involving delivery riders remain a road-safety concern. High-speed riding, pressure to meet delivery targets and challenging road conditions often contribute to collisions with other vehicles.

A tragic incident in 2016, in which a driver killed several delivery riders, highlighted the risks faced by these workers on the road.

"Seeing a motorbike speeding on public roads is a nightmare. The speed at which some riders travel is shocking," says Salim Mohammed, an investor.

"The other day, I saw a delivery bike moving at high speed that nearly collided with my car. I was shaken and couldn't move for a moment after the incident," he recalled, urging stricter enforcement of speed limits for two-wheelers.

Officials say intense heat, long working hours and pressure for quick deliveries can push riders toward risky behaviour such as speeding or improper lane changes. Many accidents also occur after sunset, when visibility drops and fatigue sets in.

Other factors include reckless riding, failure to wear proper safety gear and inexperienced or unlicensed riders.

Although motorcycles are far fewer than cars in Oman, hundreds are registered every year and contribute to the country's accident statistics.

Mohammed Al Kaabi, an HSE expert, believes stronger safety guidelines are necessary to protect delivery riders. He proposes a clear code of conduct:

Mandatory helmets: Riders must wear certified helmets at all times to reduce severe head injuries.

Proper safety gear: High-visibility jackets and protective equipment, especially for night deliveries.

Training programmes: Regular safety training for riders to improve road awareness and defensive riding skills.

Nations flay remarks on Occupied Territories

FROM PAGE 1

...has issued a joint statement denouncing recent remarks by the United States Ambassador to Israel regarding occupied Arab lands.

The statement, released by the respective foreign ministries, expresses profound condemnation and grave concern over the ambassador's suggestion that Israel's control over territories belonging to Arab states — including the occupied West Bank — could be deemed acceptable. The countries describe these remarks as dangerous, provocative, and a flagrant breach of international law and the United Nations Charter, posing a serious threat to regional security and stability. The signatories emphasise that such statements fundamentally contradict the vision articulated by US President Donald Trump and the comprehensive framework aimed at resolving the conflict in Gaza.

That framework, they note, is predicated on de-escalation and the creation of a viable political path towards a comprehensive settlement that secures the Palestinian people's right to an independent state. Any rhetoric seeking to legitimise the seizure of others' territory undermines these objectives, fuels regional tensions, and constitutes incitement rather than a contribution to peace. The statement reaffirms that Israel holds no sovereignty over occupied Palestinian territory or any other occupied Arab lands. It categorically rejects any attempts to annex the West Bank or sever it from the Gaza Strip, strongly opposes the expansion of illegal settlement activities, and denounces any threats to the sovereignty of Arab states.

Warning that continued expansionist policies and unlawful actions by Israel will only precipitate further violence and conflict while eroding prospects for peace, the joint statement calls for an immediate end to such inflammatory discourse. — ONA

Over 270 pregnancies, 99 births recorded at fertility centre

MUSCAT: The Fertility Center at Al Wattayah Gynecology and Obstetrics Complex, affiliated with the Directorate-General of Khoula Hospital, has recorded 272 pregnancies resulting in 99 births, including twin cases, since its opening in 2024. Additionally, 143 families are currently awaiting the birth of their first child during the current year.

Dr Naema bint Obaid al Maamari, Senior Consultant in IVF and ICSI and Head of the Fertility Center, said that the number of confirmed pregnancies rose from 84 cases in 2024 to 188 cases in 2025. This brings the total number of pregnancies over the two years to 272, representing an estimated increase of approximately 124 per cent, which reflects the continuous improvement in the performance of the laboratory and the fertility clinic, as well as the effectiveness of the treatment plans followed.

DR NAEMA BINT OBAID AL MAAMARI

She emphasised that during its first two years of operation (2024–2025), the centre achieved a significant expansion in workload and a clear improvement in performance indicators, which has positively impacted pregnancy rates and the success of treatment programmes.

143 families are currently awaiting the birth of their first child during the current year. — ONA

She explained that the total number of Oocyte Pick-Up (OPU) cycles reached 1,482 treatment cycles, comprising 611 cycles in 2024 and 871 cycles in 2025, an increase of 42.6 per cent between the two years. Meanwhile, the total number of Embryo Transfers (ET) reached 837 procedures, distributed between 305 transfers in 2024 and 532 transfers in 2025, reflecting growing operational capacity and improved workflow efficiency. She further noted that Frozen Embryo Transfers (FET) witnessed a remarkable rise, increasing from 184 procedures in 2024 to 430 procedures in 2025, due to the development of freezing protocols and improved embryo quality and cycle management.

She added that a total of 1,674 embryos were transferred, including 409 fresh embryos and 1,265 frozen embryos, at a rate of approximately two embryos per transfer. — ONA

SHORT*TAKES*

The Royal Decree granted the Board of Directors all the necessary powers to enable the Authority to exercise its functions and achieve its objectives.

Details of Royal Decree on CDAA unveiled

MUSCAT: *Details of Royal Decree No 31/2026 regarding the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) were issued in the Official Gazette on Sunday.*

The decree stipulates that the Authority's management and affairs will be overseen by a Board of Directors chaired by the Minister of the Royal Office, Head of the Office of the Supreme Commander. The Board's members include the Minister of Finance, the Inspector-General of Police and Customs, the Minister of Health, the Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces, the Secretary-General of the National Security Council, and the Chairman of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority.

The Royal Decree granted the Board of Directors all the necessary powers to enable the Authority to exercise its functions and achieve its objectives. These powers include formulating the Authority's general policy for exercising its powers and submitting it to the Supreme Commander for approval, monitoring its implementation, approving the Authority's organisational structure and submitting it to the Supreme Commander for approval, approving the Authority's administrative divisions and defining their responsibilities, approving draft financial, administrative,and functional regulations, approving the Authority's draft annual budget and submitting it to the Ministry of Finance, approving the Authority's final accounts and submitting them to the Ministry of Finance, determining the fees charged by the Authority for its services after approval by the Ministry of Finance, proposing amendments to laws related to civil defence and ambulance services, approving draft agreements and memoranda of understanding related to civil defence and ambulance services and approving the annual report on the Authority's activities and submitting it to the Supreme Commander.

'Khayr Yubna' delivers Ramadhan food boxes

The distribution effort was coordinated in association with the Zakat Committees of Muttrah and Al Amerat.

MUSCAT: *In a display of community spirit and social responsibility, Knowledge Oman, and Techno Plastic, successfully collaborated to distribute Ramadhan essential food boxes to families in need through the joint initiative 'Khayr Yubna' — meaning 'goodness is built'.*

The distribution effort was coordinated in association with the Zakat Committees of Muttrah and Al Amerat, ensuring that support reached deserving households across several communities. Food boxes were delivered to beneficiaries in Al Seeb, Al Suwaiq, Al Amerat and Al Musannah, helping families prepare for the holy month with dignity and reassurance. The name 'Khayr Yubna' reflects the core philosophy that sustainable community well-being is built through collective acts of kindness and meaningful partnerships.

OMAN ACROSS AGES MUSEUM RECEIVES 940,000 VISITORS

MANAH: *Oman Across Ages Museum recorded approximately 940,000 visitors from its opening on March 13, 2023, until the end of January 2026.*

According to official statistics issued by the museum, Omani visitors numbered 770,000, representing 82 per cent of the total figure. These statistics do not include the thousands of visitors who attend events held in the museum's halls, such as seminars, lectures and activities celebrating official and social occasions.

Eng Al Yakdhan bin Abdullah al Harthy, Director-General of Oman Across Ages Museum, stated in an interview with Oman News Agency that 90 per cent of Omani visitors belong to the family category from various governorates. He noted that the museum has thus achieved one of its primary objectives as an interactive institution seeking to strengthen the relationship between Omani youth and the cultural heritage of their country while introducing its history.

The museum has achieved one of its primary objectives as an interactive institution. ***— ONA***

He indicated that the number of visitors during 2025 exceeded 204,000, including 134,669 Omani visitors, 31,922 foreign tourists, 3,317 GCC tourists and 25,114 visitors from residents of the various governorates. Additionally, 77,828 students from schools across the Sultanate of Oman visited the museum during the same year. The number of visitors exceeded 44,000 during the months of November and December, while more than 62,500 visitors were recorded during the summer months from May to August.

The Director-General explained that a visitor spends an average of two hours inside the museum halls, though the duration of a visit may exceed four hours. ***— ONA***

Al Batinah North leads Net-Zero push with science

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, FEB 22

AL BATINAH North Governorate is emerging as a model for environmentally driven development, guided by a road map rooted in applied science, industrial collaboration, and engineering solutions aligned with Oman's growth priorities.

The latest recommendations place renewable energy — particularly solar, wind, and green hydrogen — at the heart of the region's transformation. A key technical innovation links energy generation with intelligent management platforms, enabling real-time load optimisation, emissions reduction, and predictive balancing across electricity networks. This approach is especially relevant for industrial hubs like Sohar, where energy demand and economic activity intersect.

Localising artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies for environmental applications is another priority. A proposed national AI platform would unify air and water quality monitoring systems, shifting from delayed reporting to predictive analytics. For Al Batinah North's coastal and industrial areas, such capabilities are critical for protecting marine ecosystems and groundwater while supporting economic growth.

Infrastructure resilience was also highlighted. Machine-learning models to anticipate faults in electricity and water networks were proposed as tools to reduce operational losses and prevent disruptions, emphasising that sustainability must include reliability.

13 countries across Asia and Africa took part in the technical session which saw 76 research papers were presented.

The circular economy featured prominently, with initiatives to convert industrial and agricultural waste into alternative fuels, fertilisers and sustainable construction materials. In a governorate hosting major industrial operations, this engineering-driven waste valorisation model offers both environmental and economic benefits.

Technical sessions highlighted practical applications. Eng Sultan al Raisi of Sohar Aluminium shared sustainability practices and efficiency measures, emphasising industry-academia knowledge exchange to accelerate low-carbon innovation.

Eng Ibtisam al Shanfari outlined Madayn's carbon-neutral pathway, noting strategic partnerships and green investment frameworks supporting industrial cities.

Adding a marine dimension, Ahlam al Kharousi, Marine Environment Specialist at the Marine Science and Fisheries Center, presented Oman's first IoT-based smart aquaponics monitoring system in a protected environment, demonstrating how real-time water quality analytics can enhance food security and environmental stewardship simultaneously.

Urban sustainability was also stressed, with pilot smart traffic and emissions management systems proposed across Omani governorates, including Al Batinah North, to reduce congestion and carbon intensity. These technically grounded recommendations were showcased at the Third International Conference on Environmental Sciences and Engineering for Sustainable Development 2026, hosted by UTAS Sohar, with participation from 13 countries across Asia and Africa and 76 research papers were presented. Together, they position Al Batinah North as both an industrial gateway and a living laboratory where environmental science and engineering are shaping Oman's Net-Zero future.

Ramadhan initiatives boost social solidarity

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

AS Ramadhan unfolds, Oman's long-standing traditions of compassion, generosity and community support are once again taking centre stage. Across Muscat Governorate, these values are being translated into organised action through Social Development Committees operating under the supervision of the Governor's Offices in each wilayat, ensuring that charitable initiatives are coordinated, transparent and far-reaching.

Working in line with the framework set by the Ministry of Social Development through Decision No (217/2024), the committees are tasked with identifying priority social initiatives, encouraging volunteerism and improving the living conditions of low-income families.

Their responsibilities also include supporting income-generating opportunities for limited-income groups and persons with disabilities while coordinating with relevant entities to ensure assistance reaches eligible beneficiaries effectively.

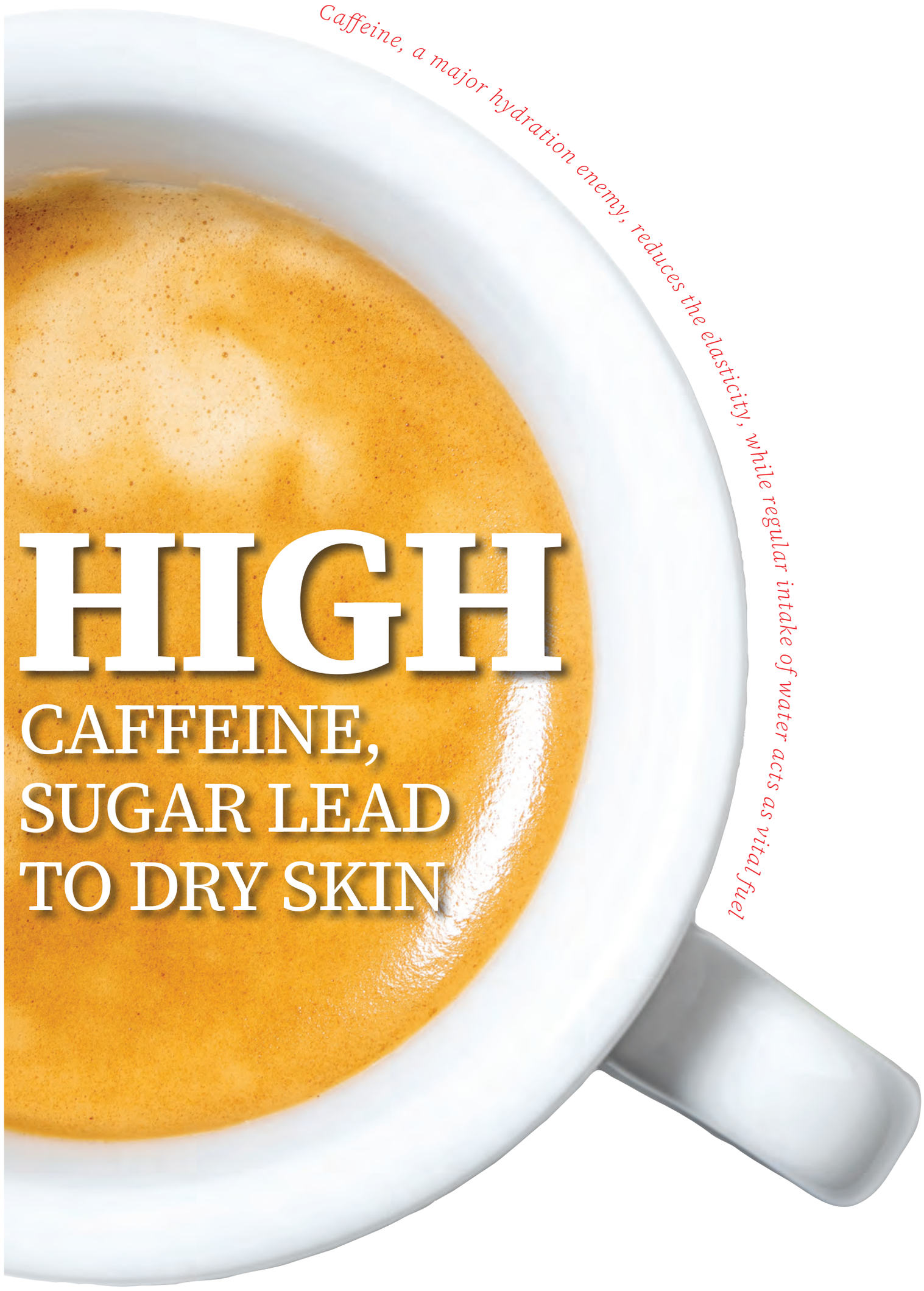
Social Development Committees and local volunteer teams work through close cooperation.

During Ramadhan, the committees take on an especially active role, functioning as coordination platforms that bring together volunteer groups, government bodies and private sector partners.

Through collaboration with businesses and traders, Ramadan food parcels and shopping vouchers are distributed to families in need in cooperation with the Oman Charitable Organisation. The structured approach not only eases financial pressures on households but also reinforces the spirit of unity that defines the holy month. Across Muscat, initiatives are implemented through close cooperation between the Social Development Committees and local volunteer teams.

In Bausher, the committee supervises the distribution of Ramadhan assistance according to approved guidelines. The Nidaa Charity Team runs daily Iftar meal distributions for fasting individuals while also delivering food baskets to registered families. In Muttrah, the Muttrah Charity Team implements several initiatives under committee supervision. The widely recognised 'Iftar Saem' programme distributes meals at mosques.

Ramadhan



HIGH CAFFEINE, SUGAR LEAD TO DRY SKIN

Caffeine, a major hydration enemy, reduces the elasticity, while regular intake of water acts as vital fuel

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

THE risk of dehydration increases for those fasting during the holy month of Ramadhan, as many suffer from dry skin problems during this time.

Many hours of abstaining from food and drink, and the altered sleep schedules, affect the body's health, both internally and externally. One of the most noticeable issues during this month is dry skin. The skin often appears dull, tired and dry.

Dr Ibrahim Kamel, a consultant dermatologist and cosmetologist, said the primary cause of dry skin is dehydration. When the body's water intake decreases, the skin is quickly affected. Dryness becomes more pronounced, particularly on the face and hands.

He said excessive consumption of salty or fried foods and sweets impacts the skin tone. Dr Ibrahim explained that while salty foods may increase fluid retention in the body without providing genuine hydration, excess sugar leads to a loss of radiance and a tired appearance because sugar makes the skin look older than its actual age.

RADIANT SKIN DURING RAMADHAN

- *Drink at least eight glasses of water between Iftar and Suhoor*
- *Avoid sugary drinks, salty foods and caffeine*
- *Limit caffeine intake to 400 mg per day or four to five cups*
- *Excessive coffee consumption causes dehydration because it leads to urination*
- *Caffeine reduces the elasticity, while regular intake of water acts as vital fuel*

Drink at least eight glasses of water between Iftar (breaking the fast) and Suhoor (pre-dawn meal). Avoid consuming carbonated or sugary drinks and caffeine. It is preferable to eat healthy foods rich in fibre and antioxidants.

The Gulf Health Council indicated that excessive coffee consumption during Ramadhan causes frequent urination. Moderate your caffeine intake and ensure a variety of healthy fluids and a balanced beverage schedule to protect yourself from dehydration during Ramadhan. The Council emphasises the importance of ensuring a varied diet during Ramadhan, including different sources of fluids, and limiting caffeine intake to 400 milligrams per day, equivalent to about four to five cups.

If you can't completely give up coffee, limit yourself to one cup two hours after Iftar and drink two glasses of water immediately afterward to counteract its diuretic effect. Avoid caffeine entirely at Suhoor as it will reduce the fluids your body needs to sustain itself throughout the day, leading to dry skin and increased thirst.

Skincare experts believe that Ramadhan is not merely a spiritual observance, but a season of exceptional cellular regeneration, provided hydration is properly managed. Medical reports indicate that foregoing an extra cup of coffee and opting for smart hydration is not a sacrifice, but a strategic decision that gives the face a radiant glow to combat the fatigue of fasting. Caffeine, a major hydration enemy, reduces the elasticity, while regular intake of water acts as vital fuel, rebuilding the skin's protective barrier. In this context, adhering to natural caffeine alternatives and focusing on potassium-rich foods will transform your skin from dull to naturally radiant.

Dry skin is common during Ramadhan, but it can be managed with some awareness and attention to small details, allowing you to maintain soft skin throughout the month. Therefore, the smartest investment in your skin during Ramadhan starts with drinking plenty of water and getting seven to eight hours of sleep to maintain your skin tone.

Blood donors urged to step forward during Ramadhan

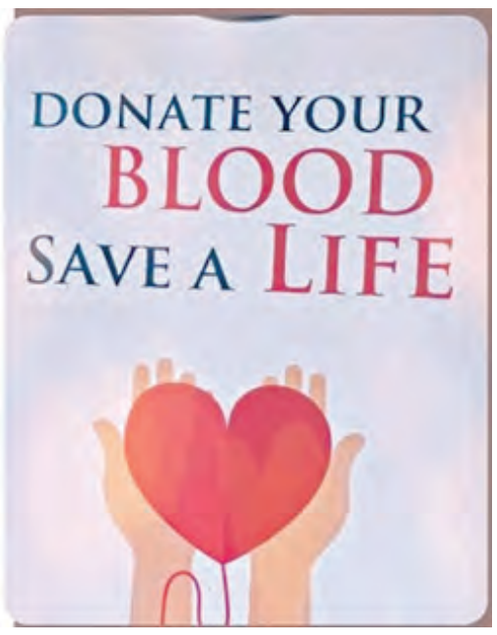
KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, FEB 22

BLOOD donors across the country are being urged to support the national blood donation drive by contributing blood and platelet units at the nearest blood banks or by visiting the Department of Blood Bank Services in Bausher, where stocks often run low during the holy month of Ramadhan.

Donation services remain open throughout the day. While non-fasting individuals may donate during daytime hours, those observing the fast are encouraged to donate after Iftar, provided they meet the basic eligibility criteria.

The Department of Blood Bank Services frequently issues appeals during Ramadhan as donor turnout tends to decline. In a typical month, the Central Blood Bank requires between 2,700 and 2,900 blood units and around 260 to 270 platelet units to meet patient demand.

To address the shortage, authorities have confirmed that donation services are functioning as usual. Fasting donors are especially encouraged to donate after breaking their fast, between 7.30 pm and 11.30 pm.



Health officials say the need remains urgent. "The Muscat Governorate alone requires an average of around 120 blood units daily and more than 5,000 units monthly. The situation is critical, and we call on donors to come forward and help save lives," a source close to the Bausher blood bank said.

During Ramadhan, the blood bank also conducts donation campaigns in mosques and markets as the number of donors typically drops because many Muslims prefer to donate after Iftar.

At the same time, hospitals continue to require a steady supply of blood for patients, including those with genetic blood disorders such as sickle cell anaemia and thalassemia, cancer patients, accident victims and individuals undergoing major surgeries.

Officials say the goal is to collect more than 2,900 blood units and 270 platelet units during the month to meet urgent medical needs across the Sultanate of Oman.

"Join us in saving lives and offering hope to those in need," the Department of Blood Bank Services said in its appeal.

This year, the department is organising more than 20 blood donation campaigns in mosques and malls across Muscat to help maintain a steady supply.

Blood can be donated daily at the Central Blood Bank from 7.30 pm to 11.30 pm, as well as in the morning from Sunday to Thursday between 8 am and 12.30 pm.

SHORTTAKES

Ibra Ramadhan tent supports productive families, SMEs

IBRA: *A Ramadhan tent dedicated to supporting productive families opened in the Wilayat of Ibra in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate.*

The two-week event is organised by the Ministry of Social Development, represented by the General-Directorate of Social Development in the governorate, in cooperation with several public and private sector institutions.

Said bin Saif al Habsi, Director of the Partnership and Community Development Department, said 20 productive families are participating in the Ramadhan tent, displaying a variety of items including traditional Omani food products and household goods.

He explained that the initiative aims to support home-based businesses and provide participants with new marketing opportunities, especially as the venue is located near Ibra Public Park, which attracts visitors during the evening hours in Ramadhan.

The event will also feature numerous family-oriented activities and children's programmes. An open-air theatre has been set up to host competitions, entertainment events and community activities throughout the duration of the tent.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Mohammed bin Nasser al Maskari, Chairman of the Board, OCCI branch in Al Sharqiyah North, with representatives from various institutions in attendance.

Officials said the Ramadhan tent initiative aims to encourage productive families and strengthen the culture of home-based entrepreneurship and local food production in the governorate. — ONA

Toastmasters host annual 'Speak to Inspire' speech contest

Five Area 21 clubs hosted its Annual Speech Contest.

MUSCAT: *District 105 of Toastmasters International under Area 21 of Division G, successfully hosted its Annual Speech Contest at Ghala, under the theme 'Speak to Inspire.' The event brought together members from the five Area 21 clubs — Galaxy, ReaDiscovery, ABC, Al Musannah, and ISB Toastmasters — collectively known as GRAMI. The contest featured four categories: Prepared Speech, Humorous Speech, Evaluation and Impromptu (Table Topics), offering participants a dynamic platform to showcase public speaking skills. Contestants delivered engaging and confident speeches, reflecting the spirit of inspiration, leadership and effective communication.*

Toastmasters provides a global platform for professionals, students and homemakers, supporting both citizens and expatriates in developing communication, leadership and networking skills through structured meetings and constructive feedback.

For youth below 18, around 40 Gavel Clubs in Oman recently held the Oman Gavel Championship of Public Speaking, encouraging young communicators to build confidence early.

GRAMI clubs meet regularly at the Coral Building in Al Khuwair: ABC Toastmasters on Mondays at 7:30 pm, Galaxy Toastmasters on Saturdays at 4 pm, and ReaDiscovery Toastmasters online on Wednesdays with a focus on book and movie reviews. Al Musannah Toastmasters, an Arabic-speaking club, meets at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences – Al Musannah on Mondays at 5 pm, while ISB Toastmasters, a corporate club, caters to teachers at Indian School Bausher.

SOHAR POWER

P.O. Box: 147, Jawharat A' Shatti, PC 134, Sultanate of Oman, Fax: 24698496, E-mail: admin@soharpower.com, Website: www.soharpower.com

Audtied Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Sohar Power Company SAOG ("Sohar Power" or the "Company"), I am pleased to present you with the Directors' Report of the Company for the period ended 31 December 2025.

On 25 March 2025, Sohar Power Company shareholders held their Annual Ordinary General Meeting ("AOGM").

The Company is now back into full solvency position, following the satisfaction of all the Conditions Precedent (CPs) to the executed Amended and Restated Agreement (A&RA) on 12 December 2024 with lenders. The A&RA is now effective since 29 May 2025.

Health & Safety

2025 has seen excellent Health and Safety performance for Sohar Power.

During the year, the Company undertook the following major activities at site:

(a) Re-commissioning the 3 gas turbines in open cycle in accordance with the new PPA.

(b) Normal power plant operations, undertaken by the O&M Operator after March 28, 2025 (i.e. achievement of Commercial Operations Date "COD").

The number of LTA free days at the end of 2025 for the Plant Operations (cumulative since the expired PWPA) stands at 4,719 days.

(c) Dismantling of the MSF Units which is being undertaken by the MSF Buyer. The MSF Dismantling Project has clocked over 126,130 manhours with no Lost Time Accidents (LTA).

The Health and Safety of our employees, contractors and visitors remains the utmost priority for the Company. The Company is committed to maintain its record to ensure that highest standards of safety are maintained and that they are completed without any LTAs.

Operations

Following COD, the Plant has so far generated 374,566 MWH of electricity. The three gas turbine units have been cycled, which is typical for an open cycle plant, and have clocked an aggregate of 350 starts since COD (i.e. an average of 117 starts per gas turbine).

During the year, GT#2 suffered a loss of power supply due to technical issues resulting in a forced outage event. Following a concerted effort put in by the Company, its Operator, the OEM and other contractors, the unit was returned to service on 21st August; after a period of 89 days. The Company's insurance consultants have finalised the claim and formally submitted to the insurance for their verification. An initial down payment of OMR 1 million has been approved by the insurance and the amount is expected to be received by the Company in Q1 2026. The company continues to follow up on the balance of the claim

Financial Performance

The Company has ended the year with a net profit of RO 16.8 million compared to a net profit of RO 22 million in 2024. The debt write off realised during 2025 compared to capital reduction and asset restoration during 2024.

The revenue and other income for the year amount to OMR 16.3 million against OMR NIL million for 2024. This is mainly due to the revenues generated on account of the new PPA.

The operating cost and taxes for the year 2025 amount to OMR 20.1 million against OMR 6.2 million for the year 2024. This is due to costs related to recommissioning the plant and the operations costs following the start of new PPA.

Currently the Company shares are traded under the monitoring market. Following the return of the Company to solvency position during Q2 2025, the company approached the MSX to restore the Company's shares to the regular market. As part of its annual review, MSX are currently monitoring the Company results and expected to make a decision on such transfer in 2026.

Corporate Governance

In line with efforts deployed in previous years, the Company ensured that its organization, systems, policies, and procedures follow the highest standards of governance to always comply with the Code of Corporate Governance promulgated by the FSA, including the new Code requirements effective since July 2016.

Corporate Social Responsibility

In 2025, following its return to solvency, the Company resumed its activities in contributing to local projects aimed at local communities and the people of the Sultanate of Oman, through supporting educational, environmental, sports, and social institutions.

Outlook for 2026

The Company is actively pursuing plant improvement projects; especially those related to component obsolescence, equipment deficiencies and plant efficiencies.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to thank our valued stakeholders, including our shareholders, lenders, the APSR, Nama PWP, FSA and partners for their continued support, trust, and confidence, especially during the year. I would also like to thank all the personnel associated with the preservation of the plant in Sohar and the staff of the Company for their loyalty, dedication and commitment.

I would also like to express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Government for their continued guidance, support and encouragement to the private sector.

Miklos Almasy
Chairman of the Board

Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2025

	31 Dec 2025 RO'000	31 Dec 2024 RO'000	31 Dec 2025 USD'000	31 Dec 2024 USD'000
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	19,192	20,720	49,849	53,818
Right-of-use asset	1,142	1,273	2,965	3,305
Total non-current assets	20,334	21,993	52,814	57,123
Current assets				
Inventories	834	-	2,167	-
Other receivables	2,075	6,187	5,381	16,066
Cash and bank balances	3,514	841	9,129	2,184
Total current assets	6,423	7,028	16,677	18,250
Total assets	26,757	29,021	69,491	75,373
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Capital and reserves				
Share capital	2,000	2,000	5,195	5,195
Legal reserve	667	667	1,732	1,732
Retained earnings/(accumulated losses)	560	(16,220)	1,440	(42,141)
Total capital and reserves	3,227	(13,553)	8,367	(35,214)
Non-current liabilities				
Term loans	11,907	-	30,929	-
Lease liabilities	1,049	1,152	2,725	2,993
Provision for decommissioning costs	3,124	2,276	8,116	5,913
Deferred tax liability	1,725	705	4,479	1,831
Employee benefit liabilities	33	23	85	61
Total non-current liabilities	17,838	4,156	46,334	10,798
Current liabilities				
Term loans	1,117	32,016	2,900	83,159
Lease liabilities	199	199	517	516
Accruals and other payables	974	6,174	2,537	16,039
Amounts due to related parties	1,455	29	3,779	75
Income tax payable	1,947	-	5,057	-
Total current liabilities	5,692	38,418	14,790	99,789
Total liabilities	23,530	42,574	61,124	110,587
Total equity and liabilities	26,757	29,021	69,491	75,373
Net assets/(deficit) per share	0.161	(0.678)	0.418	(1.761)

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Year ended 31 Dec 2025 RO'000	Year ended 31 Dec 2024 RO'000	Year ended 31 Dec 2025 USD'000	Year ended 31 Dec 2024 USD'000
Revenue	14,077	-	36,563	-
Direct costs	(14,833)	(2,452)	(38,526)	(6,371)
Gross loss	(756)	(2,452)	(1,963)	(6,371)
Other income	2,254	606	5,855	1,574
General and administrative expenses	(573)	(592)	(1,491)	(1,537)
	1,681	14	4,364	37
Operating profit/ (loss) for the year	925	(2,438)	2,401	(6,334)
Gain on extinguishment of financial liabilities	20,531	-	53,327	-
Impairment reversal on property, plant and equipment	-	17,777	-	46,175
Gain on disposal of property, plant and equipment	-	4,929	-	12,801
Related party loan written-back	-	4,915	-	12,766
Finance costs	(1,709)	(2,505)	(4,441)	(6,506)
Profit before tax	19,747	22,678	51,287	58,902
Income tax expense	(2,967)	(695)	(7,706)	(1,805)
Net profit after tax and total comprehensive income for the year	16,780	21,983	43,581	57,097
Earnings per share - basic and diluted	0.839	1.099	2.179	2.855

Note: The complete accounts either in English or Arabic will be sent to any shareholder by mail within 7 days of receipt.

SHORTTAKES

A view of South Korean and Japanese national flags hoisted, at Tokyo International Airport. — **Reuters**

S KOREA PROTESTS JAPANESE EVENT OVER DISPUTED LANDS

SEOUL: *South Korea on Sunday protested a Japanese government event commemorating a cluster of disputed islands between the two countries, calling the move an unjust assertion of sovereignty over its territory.*

In a statement, the foreign ministry said it strongly objected to the Takeshima Day event held by Japan's Shimane prefecture and to the attendance of a senior Japanese government official, urging Japan to immediately abolish the ceremony.

The tiny islets, known as Takeshima in Japan and Dokdo in South Korea, which controls them, have long been a source of tension between the two neighbours, whose relations remain strained by disputes rooted in Japan's colonial rule of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945.

"Dokdo is clearly South Korea's sovereign territory historically, geographically and under international law," the ministry said. The ministry summoned a top Japanese diplomat to the ministry building in Seoul to lodge a protest.

Seoul has repeatedly objected to Japan's territorial claims over the islands, including a protest issued over comments by Japan's foreign minister during a parliamentary address asserting Tokyo's sovereignty over the islets. — **Reuters**

ISRAELI VIOLATIONS IN LEBANON TEST FRAGILE TRUCE

Destroyed vehicles lie next to a damaged building, in the aftermath of an Israeli strike, in Bekaa valley. — **Reuters**

BEIRUT: *At least 10 people were killed and 50 wounded in Israeli strikes in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, two security sources said, after the Israeli military said it had targeted Hezbollah sites in the Baalbek area.*

The strikes were among the deadliest reported in eastern Lebanon in recent weeks and risk testing a fragile US-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Lebanese group Hezbollah, which has been strained by recurring accusations of violations. Israel and Hezbollah agreed to a US-brokered ceasefire in 2024 intended to end more than a year of cross-border exchanges of fire.

Separately, the Israeli military said it also struck what it described as a Hamas command centre from which militants operated in the Ain al Hilweh area in southern Lebanon. Ain al Hilweh is a crowded Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun condemned the overnight Israeli strikes on the Sidon area and towns in Bekaa as a "new violation" of Lebanon's sovereignty and a breach of UN obligations, urging countries backing regional stability, including the United States, to press for an immediate halt to avert further escalation. — **Reuters**

IRAN AND US VIEWS ON SANCTIONS RELIEF DIFFER, SAYS IRANIAN OFFICIAL

DUBAI: *Iran and the United States have differing views over sanctions relief in talks to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions, a senior Iranian official said on Sunday, adding that new talks were planned in early March as fears of a military confrontation grow. Iran and the US renewed negotiations earlier this month to tackle their decades-long dispute over Tehran's nuclear programme as the US builds up its military capability in the Middle East, fuelling fears of a wider war.*

"The last round of talks showed that US ideas regarding the scope and mechanism of sanctions relief differ from Iran's demands. Both sides need to reach a logical timetable for lifting sanctions," the official said.

While rejecting a US demand for "zero enrichment" Tehran has signalled its readiness to compromise on its nuclear work. Washington views enrichment inside Iran as a potential pathway to nuclear weapons. Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons and wants its right to enrich uranium to be recognised.

The Iranian official said Tehran could seriously consider a combination of exporting part of its HEU stockpile, diluting the purity of its most highly enriched uranium and the establishment of a regional enrichment consortium in exchange for the recognition of Iran's right to "peaceful nuclear enrichment". "The negotiations continue and the possibility of reaching an interim agreement exists". — **Reuters**

Pakistan says carried out air strikes in Afghanistan

PAKISTAN said on Sunday it launched multiple air strikes targeting militants in neighbouring Afghanistan, where the government reported children were among dozens of people killed and wounded. The overnight attacks were the most extensive since border clashes in October killed more than 70 people on both sides and wounded hundreds. Islamabad said it hit seven sites along the border region targeting Afghanistan-based militant groups "in the aftermath of recent suicide bombing incidents in Pakistan". The military targeted the Pakistani Taliban and its associates, as well as an affiliate of the IS group, a statement by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said.

Afghanistan's defence ministry said "dozens of innocent civilians, including women and children, were martyred and wounded" when strikes hit a madrasa and homes in Nangarhar and Paktika provinces. A journalist in Nangarhar's Bihsud district said residents from around the remote and mountainous area joined rescuers in one village, using a digger and shovels to search for bodies under the rubble. "People here are ordinary people. The residents of this village are our relatives.

When the bombing happened, one person who survived was shouting for help," said neighbour Amin Gul Amin, 37. Nangarhar police said that the bombardment started at around midnight and hit three districts.

"Civilians were killed. In one house, there were 23 family members. Five wounded people were taken out," said police spokesperson Sayed Tayeeb Hammad.

Afghan men gather near a damaged car after an overnight Pakistani air strike, in Bihsud district. — **AFP**

Islamabad said it hit seven sites along the border region targeting Afghanistan-based militant groups "in the aftermath of recent suicide bombing incidents in Pakistan". The military targeted the Pakistani Taliban and its associates, as well as an affiliate of the IS group

Afghanistan's defence ministry said it will "deliver an appropriate and calculated response" to the Pakistani strikes. The two countries have been locked in an increasingly bitter dispute since the Taliban authorities retook control of Afghanistan in 2021.

Pakistani military action killed 70 Afghan civilians between October and December, according to the UN mission in Afghanistan.

Several rounds of negotiations followed an initial ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Turkiye, but they have failed to produce a lasting agreement.

Saudi Arabia intervened this month, mediating the release of three Pakistani soldiers captured by Afghanistan in October. The deteriorating relationship has hit people in both countries, with the land border largely shut for months.

Pakistan said on Sunday that despite repeated urging by Islamabad, the Taliban authorities have failed to act against militant groups using Afghan territory to carry out attacks in Pakistan. The Afghan government has denied harbouring militants.

Islamabad launched the strikes after a suicide blast at a Shiite mosque in Islamabad two weeks ago and other such attacks more recently in northwestern Pakistan.

The IS group had claimed responsibility for the mosque bombing, which killed at least 40 people and wounded more than 160 in the deadliest attack in Islamabad since 2008. The militant group's regional chapter also claimed a deadly suicide bombing at a Kabul restaurant last month.

Afghans gathered around a mass grave to bury villagers killed in overnight air strikes by Pakistan, which said its military targeted militants. "The house was completely destroyed. My children and family members were there. My father and my sons were there.

All of them were killed," said Nezakat, a 35-year-old farmer in Bihsud district, who only gave one name. Residents from around the remote Bihsud district in Nangarhar joined searchers to look for bodies under the rubble, using shovels and a digger. "People here are ordinary people. — **AFP**

MOROCCO FLOOD EVACUEES MARK MUTED RAMADHAN

KENTIRA: *During the Muslim holy month of Ramadhan, families traditionally gather over joyous feasts to break the daytime fast. But the floods that battered northwestern Morocco in recent weeks have left evacuees like Habachi with little to celebrate. " Just before sunset, women gathered around small stoves. They made do with no running water, and soon the smell of grilled fish wafted through the site. The families then retreated to their tents for Iftar, with candles providing light for lack of electricity.*

The heavy downpours have displaced over 180,000 people as of last week, authorities said, with at least four people killed. Most evacuees in the region have been allowed to return home, but that was not yet an option for Habachi and his children. The camp managers serve each family water and a bag of rice per day. Several homes showed signs of flooding, with walls torn open and floors soaked. Families had left their belongings stored on top of wardrobes out of fear the water could rise again. — **AFP**

TRAGIC INCIDENT

Vietnam boat collision kills six people

Six people were killed when a passenger boat collided with a vessel hauling stone and capsized on a lake in northern Vietnam. The two vessels collided on Thac Ba lake, a popular tourist site in the northern province of Lao Cai, on Saturday evening, with 17 of 23 people on board the passenger boat rescued after it capsized, the state-run Lao Dong newspaper said. Six bodies, including those of two children, were recovered by authorities. — **AFP**

DREDGING WATERWAYS

Protesters occupy port terminal in Brazil

Indigenous protesters in Brazil occupied a shipping terminal operated by US agricultural giant Cargill, demanding a ban on dredging Amazon waterways. Operations were suspended, blaming an "ongoing dispute between government authorities and Indigenous communities." Protesters are against an expansion of the ports and the dredging of the Amazon's rivers, which they consider vital to their way of life. Cargill called on the government and demonstrators to engage in a "constructive dialogue." — **AFP**

UNACCEPTABLE VISIT

Sudan slams Uganda for hosting RSF chief

Sudan's army-aligned government criticised Kampala for hosting rival paramilitary chief Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, slamming his reception by Uganda's president as an "affront to humanity". Sudan's foreign ministry on Sunday criticised the meeting, saying the RSF's atrocities had been "documented by the international community and condemned by regional organisations of which Uganda is a member", including the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). — **AFP**

SHORTTAKES

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva addresses a press conference, in New Delhi. ***— AFP***

BRAZIL'S LULA URGES TRUMP TO TREAT ALL COUNTRIES EQUALLY

NEW DELHI: *Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva urged Donald Trump to treat all countries equally after the US leader imposed a 15 per cent tariff on imports following an adverse Supreme Court ruling. "I want to tell the US President Donald Trump that we don't want a new Cold War. We don't want interference in any other country, we want all countries to be treated equally," Lula told reporters in New Delhi.*

The conservative-majority Supreme Court ruled six to three on Friday that a 1977 law Trump has relied on to slap sudden levies on individual countries, upending global trade, "does not authorise the President to impose tariffs".

Lula said he would not like to react to the Supreme Court decisions of another country, but hoped that Brazil's relations with the United States "will go back to normalcy" soon. "I am convinced that Brazil-US relation will go back to normalcy after our conversation," Lula, 80, said, adding that Brazil only wanted to "live in peace, generate jobs, and improve the lives of our people". ***— AFP***

CALIFORNIA FACES DEADLY AVALANCHE

Rescuers in California recovered the body of the ninth and final person missing in an avalanche in the Sierra Nevada mountains, the local sheriff's office said. Teams had been searching for the skiers since Tuesday, when disaster befell a backcountry trip on 2,776-metre Castle Peak in the Lake Tahoe area. Out of the four guides and 11 paying clients, six people survived the incident, one of the deadliest avalanches in modern US history. "Nine individuals who lost their lives in the Castle Peak avalanche on February 17 have been safely recovered from the mountain," the Nevada County Sheriff's Office said. ***— AFP***

GREENLAND DOES NOT NEED US HOSPITAL SHIP, SAYS DANISH MINISTER

COPENHAGEN: *Greenland does not need medical assistance from other countries, Denmark's defence minister said on Sunday, after US President Donald Trump claimed he was sending a hospital ship to the autonomous Danish territory that he covets. "The Greenlandic population receives the healthcare it needs. They receive it either in Greenland, or, if they require specialised treatment, they receive it in Denmark. So it's not as if there's a need for a special healthcare initiative in Greenland," Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen told Danish broadcaster DR.*

In Greenland as in Denmark access to healthcare is free. There are five regional hospitals across the vast Arctic island, with the Nuuk hospital serving patients from all over the territory. The Greenlandic local government signed an agreement with Copenhagen in early February to improve the treatment of Greenlandic patients in Danish hospitals.

Trump on Saturday posted on his social media platform Truth Social that "we are going to send a great hospital boat to Greenland to take care of the many people who are sick, and not being taken care of there". "It's on the way!!!" he added. Trump has said the US must control Greenland to ensure its security, though he has backed off earlier threats to seize it after striking a "framework" deal with Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte to ensure greater US influence.

Lund Poulsen told DR he was not aware of the hospital ship's possible arrival. ***— AFP***

Russian missile barrage hits energy across Ukraine

RUSSIA fired scores of missiles and drones at targets across Ukraine on Sunday, crashing into energy and rail infrastructure and residential buildings, just two days before the fourth anniversary of Russia's attack. Journalists in Kyiv heard a series of blasts starting at around 4:00 am (02:00 GMT), shortly after an air raid alert was issued, with the air force later widening the alert nationwide citing the threat of missiles. "Moscow continues to invest in strikes more than in diplomacy," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky commented on the attack on social media, saying that Russia launched about 50 missiles and 300 drones overnight. "The main target of the attack was the energy sector. Ordinary residential buildings were also damaged, and there is damage to the railway."

One man was killed and a dozen more people were wounded, among them four children, in and around Kyiv, Ukraine's national police said. Reporters saw rescuers sifting through debris of a largely destroyed two-storey house in Sofiivska Borshchagivka in the Kyiv region. Temperatures had plunged to nearly -10C when the capital was struck, with emergency services deployed across the city.

The Ukrainian capital, regularly targeted by Russian missile and drone attacks since the start of the attack on February 24, 2022, has faced waves of overnight strikes in recent weeks as Moscow has intensified its winter assaults. The Russian army said it had carried out a mass strike targeting facilities used by Ukraine's military, saying all targets were hit, in a standard comment for such attacks. Authorities in Russia's western Belgorod region said one man died after a Ukrainian drone strike.

The bombardment, which included ballistic and cruise missiles, prompted heightened vigilance across Ukraine, all the way to the western border. Ukraine's energy ministry said consumers in six eastern and southeastern region were without power after the strikes. Poland's Operational Command said early on Sunday it was scrambling jets after detecting "long?range aviation of the Russian Federation conducting strikes on the territory of Ukraine".

Firefighters work at the site of a residential building damaged during drone and missile strikes, in Kyiv. ***— Reuters***

In a separate attack, an explosion rocked a store in central Lviv, a western city near the Polish border far from the front line that is largely spared the worst of the conflict. Explosions ripped through a central shopping street at around midnight, killing a policewoman and wounding 25 people after officers responded to a reported break in. Hours later, law enforcement said it had detained a Ukrainian woman suspected in carrying out the bomb attack, without providing any further details and saying that an investigation was ongoing. "This is clearly an act of terrorism," mayor Andriy Sadovyi said of the night-time assault. Ukraine will mark four years since Russia's assault on February 24, 2022, a war that has shattered towns, uprooted millions and killed large numbers on both sides.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Ukraine was "definitely not losing" the war and that victory remained the goal. He said Ukrainian forces had clawed back about 300 square kilometres of territory in recent counter attacks, gains. If confirmed, they would be Kyiv's most significant advances since 2023. The United States is pushing both sides to end the war, brokering several rounds of talks in recent weeks without a clear breakthrough.

Meanwhile, Hungary will block the European Union's latest package of sanctions against Russia unless Ukraine re-opens a key oil pipeline that supplies the country, Hungary's prime minister and foreign minister both said on Sunday. "No support for sanctions; the 20th sanctions package will be rejected," Prime Minister Viktor Orban posted on X. "Until Ukraine resumes oil transit to Hungary and Slovakia via the Druzhba pipeline, we will not allow decisions important to Kyiv to move forward," Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto posted, also on X.

Separately, Pope Leo XIV said that peace in Ukraine is "an urgent necessity", speaking on Sunday ahead of the fourth anniversary of the war. "Peace cannot be postponed. It is an urgent necessity that must find space in hearts and be translated into responsible decisions," he said in his regular Sunday address to a crowd in St Peter's Square.

"I strongly renew my appeal: may the weapons fall silent, may the bombings cease, may a ceasefire be reached without delay, and may dialogue be strengthened to open the way to peace," the American-born pontiff said. **— AFP**

France to summon US envoy over comments on slain activist

PARIS: The French foreign ministry will summon the US ambassador to Paris over comments made by the Trump administration about the killing of a French far-right activist blamed on the hard left, France's top diplomat said on Sunday. The death of Quentin Deranque has put France on edge, igniting tensions between the left and right ahead of a 2027 presidential vote. It has also provoked international reactions, with US President Donald Trump's right-wing administration on Friday denouncing what it called "terrorism" in France.

"We are going to summon the United States ambassador to France, since the US embassy in France commented on this tragedy ... which concerns the national community," Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot told French media outlets Le Monde, France Inter and France Info. "We reject any attempt to use this tragedy ... for political purposes," he added. The foreign ministry did not say when ambassador Charles Kushner — the father of Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner — would be summoned. Deranque, 23, died from head injuries following clashes between radical-left and far-right supporters on the sidelines of a February 12 demonstration against a politician from the left-wing France Unbowed (LFI) party in Lyon.

Protesters hold portraits of far-right activist Quentin Deranque during a march, in Lyon. ***— AFP***

The State Department's bureau of counter-terrorism separately posted: "Violent radical leftism is on the rise and its role in Quentin Deranque's death demonstrates the threat it poses to public safety" — a post shared in French by the US embassy account. Deranque's killing has also caused a diplomatic feud between France and Italy, whose right-wing prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, has warm ties with Trump. She called the killing of Deranque "a wound for all of Europe," prompting French President Emmanuel Macron to criticise her for speaking out on French domestic affairs. Six men suspected of involvement in the fatal assault have been charged over the killing, while a parliamentary assistant to a radical left-wing MP has also been charged with complicity.

Thousands of people marched in southeastern France on Saturday under heavy security in tribute to a far-right activist whose killing, blamed on the hard left, has put the country on edge. The crowd — many wearing black and some covering their lower faces with masks — marched through the city of Lyon carrying flowers and placards bearing pictures of Quentin Deranque and the words, "justice for Quentin" and "the extreme left kills". The 23-year-old died from head injuries following clashes between radical left and far-right supporters on the sidelines of a demonstration against a politician from the left-wing France Unbowed (LFI) party in Lyon last week.

The authorities had deployed heavy security, including drones, fearing further clashes at the event that saw at least 3,200 people attend, according to local officials. Hours before the gathering, French President Emmanuel Macron had urged "everyone to remain" calm. He said the government would meet next week to discuss "violent action groups" in the wake of the fatal beating, which has ignited tensions between the left and right ahead of the 2027 presidential vote. **— AFP**

Rethinking teaching in a changing learning landscape

SANDHYA RAO MEHTA

The writer is an Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University

As Ramadhan piety and contemplation surround us, it is opportune to also focus on another important sphere where reflection is equally important. Education today has changed in multiple ways and without reflecting on teacher and learner roles, the process will remain fossilised in the past.

The Open University, UK, defines reflection as "the act of thinking constructively about your own professional practice, with a view to improving it wherever possible". Of course, reflection applies to students and learners as much as it does to teachers, but that is a different context.

It is normal for experienced teachers to think that they can teach in traditional ways which have worked for years in their career. But the famous educationist John Dewey observed that experience alone does not lead to effective teaching.

In fact, it is the thoughtful consideration of experience that creates meaning. This idea remains central in modern education.

Reflection in a classroom, from an instructor's point of view, is paramount as no two classes are ever the same. This is even more relevant in the rapidly changing world today, when the profile of young learners is changing right in front of us. From being visual learners, some students are focusing on audio material, making the shift from picture to sound necessary. Of course, shorter attention spans also mean that students need additional or different stimulation in terms of learning and retention. A reflective teacher should ideally ask whether the objectives of a lesson align with the activities in which students engaged. In fact, were the students engaged in the first place? It is also important to evaluate how that learning could be tested.

Such questions help instructors to refine their methods and respond to students' needs. Reflection supports professional growth by turning everyday classroom experiences into meaningful insights.

There are three important steps towards reflecting about a classroom experience from a teacher's perspective.

These include observing strategies which work or fail. This leads to planning how to modify teaching practices in light of such reflection. Lastly, implementing these new strategies in a given timeline would be crucial. Not all new strategies may work, and this would require reflection again.

Education is a process of learning through the sharing of knowledge and experiences. There is no single right way to impart information, just as there is no one ideal classroom or method of learning

Journaling, official documentation, informal meetings to share ideas, and conversations involving students are all good ways of engaging in reflection as a continuous and summative process.

Education is a process of learning by sharing knowledge and experiences. There is no one right way of imparting information, just as there is no one ideal class or learning method. Reflection aids teachers to engage in a continuing conversation with themselves and with other stakeholders, to keep the learning process engaging for all.

In a real sense, reflection transforms education from just being a cycle of mechanical tasks into a journey of understanding, for both students and teachers. It helps teachers self-evaluate their craft and remain open and responsive to change. By making reflection a regular and valued practice, education can remain thoughtful, purposeful and engaging.

WHEN LEADERSHIP DRIVES INNOVATION

AHLAM AL BALUSHI

Innovation takes many forms. Some define it as creating new products, services, or ideas that generate value. Others see it as improving existing processes or systems.

For some, it is a mindset — a willingness to experiment, take risks and challenge the status quo. What unites these perspectives is a central truth: innovation is not merely about novelty; it is about transformation.

It is the deliberate process of moving from one state to another through new methods, approaches, or ways of thinking, ultimately reshaping systems, behaviours, or mindsets to achieve meaningful outcomes.

Yet transformation alone is not enough.

True innovation requires leadership. Innovation also serves as a powerful instrument for leaders, enabling them to turn ideas into meaningful and lasting impact. Through my recent journey in exploring innovation, I began to see that the impact of new ideas often depends on the leaders who guide their adoption.

This became especially clear after watching an episode of Mulhima on the Ayn platform, where Dr Yasmeen al Balushi, in conversation with Maryam al Amri, highlighted how effective leadership shifts focus from immediate gains to lasting influence.

As I reflected, several questions kept arising that many feel but rarely voice: Are we truly measuring the right value or prioritising short-term wins over long-term change? Are we rewarding innovation or merely the appearance of it?

These are not easy questions, yet they are essential for understanding whether innovation is genuinely transformative.

In today's organisations, especially those investing in technologies like Artificial Intelligence, success depends less on the tools themselves and more on leaders who embed awareness and adaptability into innovation processes. Innovators may spark curiosity and challenge norms, but sustainable impact arises only when conscious leadership that balances ambition with foresight guides these qualities. If innovation is relative rather than absolute, leadership innovation must also be evaluated differently across contexts. Some innovators are recognised for the immediate value they deliver, while others are measured by their commitment to shaping long-term impact that may only become visible over time. In addition, here again, another unspoken question emerges: How do we know if we are making the right impact? Are we aligned with the deeper purpose of change, or are we merely creating noise?

Innovation and leadership are inseparable: one transforms ideas into action, and the other ensures those actions shape lasting change.

Faith in action: Shaping character and coexistence

Why do conversations about faith turn tense so quickly? One moment, people are talking calmly, and the next, they are defending who is right or wrong, and who owns the truth.

How does that shift happen fast? It can start to feel as if faith is something to win, rather than to live with day by day. When the conversation slows and people really listen, another picture begins to appear. It feels quieter, more grounded and far less confrontational.

Are people of faith really that far apart, or do they simply forget how close they already stand?

At its heart, faith points beyond the self. It speaks of a Creator, a source of meaning, and the belief that life matters and that choice carries weight. Many people across different traditions share this understanding, even if they describe it in different ways. This shared ground comes up often when people talk about faith, but rarely shapes how those conversations unfold. Why does humility disappear so quickly once debate begins? If faith teaches anything, it teaches humility. It reminds people that the ego does not sit at the centre, and raised voices rarely carry wisdom.

Prayer shows this more clearly than long explanations ever could. People pray in different ways and with different forms, but the moment itself feels familiar. It is a pause from noise, a step back from distraction, and a quiet search for guidance and clarity. In prayer, people admit that they do not have all the answers and they need help beyond themselves. Is that not one of the most honest human moments? Many recent reflections describe prayer and spiritual discipline as habits that slow people down and steady their reactions. Prayer teaches patience before it invites opinion, and softens responses long before it tries to soften anyone else's views.

DR KHALFAN BIN HAMED AL HARRASI

The writer is an academic and researcher

Peaceful coexistence is not some distant idea. It already exists in ordinary life

Faith also shows itself through discipline. Times of fasting, reflection, or restraint appear across traditions, sometimes even overlapping in the calendar. These moments invite people to step back from excess, notice the needs of others and practice self-control. When many people move through these periods at the same time, something subtle happens in society. Is it surprising that there is often more patience, awareness and sometimes a little more kindness? These shared rhythms rarely attract attention, yet they shape behaviour in ways arguments never do.

What matters most, however, is not what people say they believe, but how faith appears in everyday life. The way someone speaks to parents. The way they treat those who struggle. Whether they deal honestly or they choose forgiveness when holding on to anger would feel easier. Are these not the real tests of faith? These are the places where faith becomes real, not in arguments, but in behaviour. Many conversations about faith and coexistence return to this point for a reason. When people focus on living decently rather than arguing constantly, faith brings steadiness rather than tension.

Peaceful coexistence is not some distant idea. It already exists in ordinary life. People of different faiths work side-by-side, share streets and workplaces, raise families, and carry similar worries and hopes. They stand by each other during illness and hardship. In many communities, people also serve together through charity, volunteering, or simple acts of neighbourly care. Why do these stories receive so little attention? These shared efforts build trust quietly. They rarely make headlines but they carry far more meaning than loud disputes ever will.

Problems tend to surface when faith drifts away from its purpose. Faith was never meant to turn neighbours into rivals. It was meant to guide people toward what is right and fair. Many recent reflections point out that pride, fear, or pressure around identity often create tension than faith itself. When faith turns into something to defend rather than something to practice, something important slips away. Does strong faith really need constant defence? Strong faith shows itself through restraint, patience and dignity.

The world does not need more faith-based victories but needs more faith-shaped character. It needs people who listen before they react, who pause before they judge, and who trust that faith can stand on its own without noise or hostility. Someone who feels secure in faith does not feel threatened by the faith of others. Is confidence not meant to sound calm rather than loud? So perhaps the real question is not who is right and who is wrong.

Faith already gives people their own answers. The better question is simpler and more honest. Is our faith making us kinder and more careful with one another?

If the answer leans toward yes, faith is doing what it was always meant to do, and that is how bridges begin to form.

OMAN DAILY Observer

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Tel: 22651222
SECRETARY Tel: 22651200
DESK Tel: 22651209
LOCAL Tel: 22651221
BUSINESS Tel: 22651208
SPORTS Tel: 22651205
FEATURE Tel: 22651220
ONLINE Tel: 22651202
DESIGN Tel: 22651210
TRANSLATION Tel: 22651204
PROOFREADING Tel: 22651206
ADVERTISING Tel: 24649444, 24649430, 24649437, 24649401
Fax: 24649434
DISTRIBUTION AGENT Tel: 24649351/24649360
Fax: 24649379
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY: Ministry of Information
P.O. Box 974, Postal Code 100, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

DISCLAIMER: *The views and opinions expressed in these pages are solely those of the authors and do not reflect the opinion of the Observer.*

Website: *omanobserver.om* — Editor-in-chief: *Abdullah bin Salim al Shueili* — e-mail: *editor@omanobserver.om*

We welcome your opinions and views. Mail your articles (word limit 600) to editor@omanobserver.om

Ramadhan, a pause button for the human spirit

ABDULAZIZ AL JAHDHAMI

The writer is author, translator and a communications professional

In a world that rarely slows down, Ramadhan arrives like a gentle, but powerful pause. It interrupts routines, reshapes priorities, and invites millions of people to step back from the noise of their daily life. More than a month of fasting, Ramadhan is a readjustment of the human spirit.

From dawn to sunset, Muslims refrain from food and drink, but the true essence of fasting extends far beyond physical hunger. It is a thoughtful act of self-discipline in an age of instant satisfaction. At a time when everything is available at the click of a button, Ramadhan teaches people patience. When desires are immediate, it teaches limitation; when life feels rushed, it teaches stillness.

This "pause" during Ramadhan is not passive; it is deeply intentional. The early morning wake-up for Suhoor, the quiet reflection before Iftar and the nightly prayers all create moments of mindfulness that are often missing from modern life. Ramadhan encourages individuals to ask difficult but necessary questions. What truly matters? What habits need to change? What kind of person do I want to become?

Beyond the individuals, Ramadhan reshapes communities. During Ramadhan, families gather more often, neighbours exchange meals, acts of charity increase and mosques fill. The sense of shared experience — fasting together, breaking fast together, praying together — strengthens social bonds in a way few other occasions can. Hence, these merits what make Ramadhan very special time of the year.

In many societies, including here in Oman, Ramadhan transforms not just schedules, but atmospheres. Streets are quiet before sunset, homes glow at night and generosity becomes visible. Ramadhan brings reforms to individuals, societies and cities alike.

Charity, a cornerstone of the month, becomes more than an obligation; it becomes a collective movement. Donations increase, volunteers step forward and corporations amplify social responsibility initiatives. The spirit of giving becomes contagious, reminding society that compassion is not seasonal, but essential.

Yet perhaps the most profound transformation occurs internally. By temporarily stepping away from comfort, individuals rediscover gratitude. A sip of water feels like a gift, a simple meal becomes a blessing and time spent in reflection becomes food for the soul. Ramadhan gently shifts focus from consumption to consciousness.

When the month concludes and Eid celebrations begin, the challenge remains as will the pause leave a lasting imprint? The true success of Ramadhan is not measured by the number of days fasted, but by the character strengthened, the habits improved and the empathy deepened. Ultimately, the true measure of Ramadhan is not found in the calendar, but in continuity. It is not only a sacred month to be observed, but a mindset to be sustained.

In many societies, including here in Oman, Ramadhan transforms not just schedules, but atmospheres. Streets quiet before sunset, homes glow at night, and generosity becomes visible. Ramadhan brings reforms to individuals, societies and cities alike

As the crescent moon gives way to the celebrations of Eid, the real question is whether the transformation endures. Will the generosity shown during Ramadhan continue in the months that follow? Will the discipline have cultivated before dawn guide decisions long after the month has passed? Will the renewed sense of community remain alive in daily interactions? The lasting impact of Ramadhan depends not on the intensity of the month alone, but on the intention carried forward from it.

Ramadhan proves that change is possible — not through grand gestures, but through consistent, mindful acts repeated each day. It demonstrates that societies can slow down without falling behind, that families can reconnect despite busy lives and that individuals can adjust their priorities when given the space to reflect. Ramadhan reminds us that growth does not always require more; sometimes it requires less — less distraction, less excess and less rush.

In essence, Ramadhan is a powerful annual reset. It reorients hearts toward gratitude, communities toward solidarity, and individuals toward purpose. Ramadhan becomes not just a pause in the year, but a turning point within it. Ramadhan is a return to what makes life meaningful.

UKRAINIANS MOURN LOVED ONES AFTER FOUR YEARS OF WAR

MARGARYTA CHORNOKONDRATENKO

Sixty-five-year-old Halyna Popriadukhina has fled her home three times as Russian troops have marched deeper into eastern Ukraine during four years of war. Tired of running, she hopes Ukraine can somehow hold them back.

"I'm afraid there's nowhere else to escape," she said, the exhaustion apparent in her voice as she relates how one of her sons is missing in action, the other likely held by Russian forces.

Popriadukhina is among nearly 4 million people displaced within Ukraine, on top of more than 5 million who fled to Europe, as the war grinds into its fifth year next week. Many of them fear they will not see their homes, or loved ones, again. Control of her homeland of Donbas - comprised of Ukraine's industrialised eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk - is at the heart of US-backed peace talks to end the war, Europe's biggest conflict since World War Two.

Russia is demanding that Kyiv cede the remaining 20 per cent of Donetsk that it has been unable to conquer - something Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has refused even though he said US mediators had advised him behind closed doors it would be enough to secure peace. "We can't just withdraw," Zelensky said last week. "We have to understand that Donbas is a part of our independence... It's not about the land. It's not only about territories: it's about people."

Popriadukhina said she had been milking cows with a friend when missiles began flying on February 24, 2022, as the Russian war began. She reluctantly agreed to flee on her son's urging, leaving behind her home and livestock that had been critical to her survival.

"I tried to make it so that I had everything (in life)," said Popriadukhina, a former collective farmworker. "I didn't take anything from there. Everything was lost."

After several months in western Ukraine, she returned to the Donetsk region in the summer of 2022 - only to leave again last March as Russian forces pressed forward. When they lurched further westward into the Dnipropetrovsk region, she moved again. She now lives in central Ukraine, hundreds of kilometres away from her hometown of Vremivka in the east, which is now occupied by Russian troops. Ukrainian authorities allocated her an abandoned, ramshackle house in the village of Dzenzelivka.

Like countless other towns and villages across Ukraine, it features a so-called "Alley of Heroes" with portraits of fallen soldiers. Residents stop by every morning to honour them in a moment of silence.

*Popriadukhina's trajectory reflects Russia's grinding advances over the years. It occupies about one-fifth of the country after what Ukraine says have been deeply costly assaults across a battle-scarred steppe that have wiped entire settlements off the map. — **Reuters***

AI Summit: Shaping a human-centric future

At a defining moment in human history, the world gathered at the AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi. For us in India, it was a moment of immense pride and joy to welcome Heads of State, Heads of Government, delegates and innovators from across the world.

India brings scale and energy to everything it does and this summit was no exception. Representatives from over 100 nations came together. Innovators showcased cutting-edge AI products and services. Thousands of young people could be seen in the exhibition halls, asking questions and imagining possibilities. Their curiosity made this the largest and most democratised AI summit in the world. I see this as an important moment in India's development journey, because a mass movement for AI innovation and adoption has truly taken off.

Human history has witnessed many technological shifts that changed the course of civilisation. Artificial Intelligence belongs in the same league as fire, writing, electricity and the Internet. But with AI, changes that once took decades can unfold within weeks and impact the entire planet.

AI is making machines intelligent, but it is even more a force multiplier for human intent. Making AI human-centric instead of machine-centric is vital. At this summit, we placed human well-being at the heart of the global AI conversation, with the principle of 'Sarvajana Hitaya, Sarvajana Sukhaya' (Welfare for All, Happiness of All).

I have always believed that technology must serve people, not the other way around. Whether it is digital payments through UPI or Covid vaccination, we have ensured that Digital Public Infrastructure reaches everyone, leaving none behind. I could see the same spirit in the summit, in the work of our innovators in domains like agriculture, security, assistance for Divyangjan and tools for multilingual populations.

There are already examples of the empowering potential of AI in India. Recently, 'Sarlaben', an AI powered digital assistant launched by Indian dairy cooperative AMUL, is providing real-time guidance to 3.6 million dairy farmers, mostly women, about cattle health and productivity in their own language. Similarly, an AI-based platform called Bharat VISTAAR gives multilingual inputs to farmers, empowering them with information about everything from weather to market prices.

*A visitor plays with an Addverb robot at the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, India, on Thursday. — **Reuters***

NARENDRA MODI

The author is Prime Minister of India

Human history has witnessed many technological shifts that changed the course of civilisation. Artificial Intelligence belongs in the same league as fire, writing, electricity and the Internet. But with AI, changes that once took decades can unfold within weeks and impact the entire planet

Humans must never become mere data points or raw material for machines. Instead, AI must become a tool for global good, opening new doors of progress for the Global South. To translate this vision into action, India presented the MANAV framework for human-centric AI governance.

M – Moral and Ethical Systems: AI should be based on ethical guidelines; A – Accountable Governance: Transparent rules and robust oversight; N – National Sovereignty: Respect for national rights over data; A – Accessible and Inclusive: AI should not be a monopoly; and V – Valid and Legitimate: AI must adhere to laws and be verifiable.

MANAV, which means 'human', offers principles that anchor AI in human values in the 21st century.

Trust is the foundation upon which AI's future rests. As generative systems flood the world with content, democratic societies face risks from deepfakes and disinformation. Just as food carries nutrition labels, digital content must carry authenticity labels. I urge the global community to come together to create shared standards for watermarking and source verification. India has already taken a step in this direction by legally requiring clear labelling of synthetically generated content.

The welfare of our children is a matter close to our hearts. AI systems must be built with safeguards that encourage responsible, family-guided engagement, reflecting the same care we bring to education systems worldwide.

Technology yields its greatest benefit when shared, rather than guarded as a strategic asset. Open platforms can help millions of youth contribute to making technology safer and more human-centric. This collective intelligence is humanity's greatest strength. AI must evolve as a global common good.

We are entering an era where humans and intelligent systems will co-create, co-work and co-evolve. Entirely new professions will emerge. When the Internet began, no one could imagine the possibilities. It ended up creating a huge number of new opportunities and so will AI.

I am confident that our empowered youth will be the true drivers of the AI age. We are encouraging skilling, reskilling and lifelong learning by running some of the largest and most diverse skilling programmes in the world.

India is home to one of the world's largest youth populations and technology talent. With our energy capacity and policy clarity, we are uniquely positioned to harness AI's full potential. At this Summit, I was proud to see Indian companies launch indigenous AI models and applications, reflecting the technological depth of our young innovation community.

To fuel the growth of our AI ecosystem, we are building a robust infrastructure foundation.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in these pages are solely those of the authors and do not reflect the opinion of the Observer

SPORTS

SHORT*TAKES*

Nizwa player controls the ball.

NIZWA, SALALAH SHARE TOP SPOT IN BASKETBALL LEAGUE

SPORT REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The first week of the 2025–2026 Youth Basketball League, held at the sub-hall of Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher, concluded with Nizwa and Salalah jointly leading the standings after each collected four points from two matches. The opening round revealed noticeable differences in team performances and offered early indications of an open and competitive race in the coming weeks.

Nizwa topped the overall standings on points difference, having scored 177 points while conceding only 81. The team's strong start sent a clear message to rivals about its readiness to compete for the title. Nizwa displayed an organised offensive approach combined with defensive solidity that limited its opponents' impact in both opening matches.

Salalah secured second place, also with four points from two matches, after scoring 146 points and conceding 130. The team continues to challenge for the top spot on points difference. Salalah showed strong character, particularly in closely contested games decided by narrow margins, reflecting its ability to manage crucial moments effectively.

Al Amerat placed third with four points from three matches, scoring 158 points and conceding 140. Despite playing an additional match, the team delivered balanced performances that confirm its presence in the competitive race.

Seeb ranked fourth with three points from three matches, recording 159 points while conceding only 86. The team demonstrated impressive attacking strength, especially in its dominant win over Saham. However, its defeat to Salalah affected its position in the standings.

Saham came fifth with three points from three matches, all of which ended in defeat. The team scored just 34 points while conceding 234, a record that highlights clear struggles on both the defensive and offensive ends during the opening week.

Week one produced varied results. Seeb secured a commanding 103–17 victory over Saham, while Nizwa edged past Al Amerat 66–64 in a tightly contested encounter decided in the final moments. Nizwa then continued its dominance with a 110–17 win over Saham. Salalah claimed an important 69–56 victory over Seeb before confirming its strong form with a thrilling 77–74 win against Al Amerat. In the sixth match, Saham withdrew from its game against Al Amerat, resulting in a 20–0 victory awarded to Al Amerat according to league regulations.

The opening round confirms that the competition will remain wide open in the coming weeks, with close point margins among the leading teams and varying technical levels. Attention now shifts to the upcoming rounds, which may bring significant changes to the standings as each team seeks to establish itself early in the title race.

Seeb extend lead; Al Nahda and Al Nasr gain points

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

SEEB **CLUB** reaffirmed their place at the top of the standings with a convincing 3–0 victory over Oman Club in the match held at Seeb Stadium.

Seeb entered the match with an aggressive attacking approach, imposing their rhythm early on and translating their superiority into a first goal in the 31st minute. Omar al Malki capitalised on a precise pass from Abdullah Fawaz inside the penalty area, calmly slotting the ball into the net to give his side the lead.

Oman attempted to fight back by increasing pressure and pushing forward, but Seeb proved more organised and disciplined. In the 41st minute, Nasser al Rawahi intercepted the ball in midfield and surged forward before delivering a pass to Zaher al Aghbari, who doubled the lead with a composed finish past goalkeeper Abdulaziz al Hasani.

At the start of the second half, Seeb maintained control, and Omar al Malki confirmed his outstanding performance by scoring his second goal and Seeb's third in the 55th minute with a well-timed header from a perfectly delivered cross by Abdulmajeed al Balushi. The tempo eased afterwards, with Seeb comfortably preserving their advantage until the final whistle.

With this victory, Seeb strengthened their lead at the top with 38 points, moving one step closer to the title, while Oman Club remain seventh with 18 points.

Nasser al Rawahi intercepted the ball in midfield.

AL NAHDA SEAL IT WITH EXPERIENCE, IBRI PAY THE PRICE LATE ON

In a tactically contested encounter marked by mutual determination to secure points, Al Nahda Club overcame Ibri 2–0 to stay firmly in the race and continue chasing the top teams in the match held at Al Buraimi Sports Complex.

Al Nahda opened the scoring early in the 16th minute through Mohammed al Ghafri, who received the ball inside the penalty area and produced a stunning double-kick finish, giving his team a 1–0 lead at halftime.

In the second half, Ibri pushed for an equaliser, but Al Nahda's defensive solidity denied them. As the match approached its conclusion, the decisive moment arrived in stoppage time (90+2) when Ibri's Khalifa al Jamahi inadvertently turned a cross from Abdulaziz al Shamousi into his own net, sealing a 2–0 win for Al Nahda.

The result lifts Al Nahda to 25 points in fifth place, while Ibri remain in twelfth with 12 points.

AL RUSTAQ AND AL NASR DRAW

Meanwhile, the clash between Al Rustaq and Al Nasr was evenly balanced and cautious for most of its duration, ending in a draw at

Al Rustaq Sports Complex a result that reflected the competitive parity between the two sides but did little to boost their ambitions.

Al Rustaq took the lead through their professional striker Jaira Jove, before Al Nasr equalised via Beni Mujibaya, leaving both teams to settle for a point apiece.

Following the draw, Al Nasr move to 32 points in third place, while Rustaq remain bottom of the table with 5 points, facing an increasingly difficult challenge in the upcoming rounds

Oman, Seeb triumph in Handball League 2nd round

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
@riyadhbaluch

Defending champions Oman Club began their second round campaign in the Oman First Division Handball League (2025/2026 season) with a hard-fought 23–21 victory over Muscat Club at the main hall of Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

The encounter lived up to expectations, delivering a closely contested and high-intensity battle from the opening whistle. Both sides exchanged the lead over the two halves, reflecting the narrow gap in technical quality and physical readiness. The tactical approach was evident, with both coaches relying on compact defensive systems and swift counterattacks, which gave the match a disciplined and strategic rhythm.

The closing minutes proved decisive, as Oman capitalised on their experience in crucial moments. With the score finely balanced, the defending champions showed composure, reduced unforced errors and converted key attacking opportunities to secure a two-goal margin.

Oman Club player in an attempt to score a goal.

The win earned Oman two valuable points at the start of this decisive stage, underlining their determination to retain the title.

In the other fixture of the round, Seeb Club registered a deserved 27–22 victory over Nizwa, in a match also held at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex. Seeb imposed their authority from the first half, benefiting from organised defensive play and an impressive performance by their goalkeeper. The team gradually extended their advantage in the second half.

Although Nizwa attempted to fight back and close the gap, Seeb's experience and effective game management ensured they maintained control until the final whistle, collecting two important points to strengthen their position in the standings.

Second-round action continues on Tuesday, with Nizwa facing Muscat, followed by a highly anticipated clash between Oman and Seeb, both at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex. These fixtures are expected to further shape the race for top spot in the decisive phase of the league.

At the end of the first round, Oman topped the standings with 14 points, followed by Seeb with 10, Muscat in third with eight, and Nizwa fourth with the same tally. Majees, Al Shabab, Saham and Salalah failed to qualify for the second round after finishing fifth to eighth respectively.

The second round is being played in a home-and-away league format among the top four teams. The side finishing first will advance directly to the final, while the second- and third-placed teams will contest a playoff match, with the winner earning the right to face the league leaders in a decisive final to determine the champion.

SHORTTAKES

Seeb have won seven consecutive titles out of 14 previous editions.

SEEB CHASE 8TH STRAIGHT MINISTRY TITLE VS AL BASHAYER TODAY

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The curtain falls this evening, on the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth Volleyball Shield as Seeb and Al Bashayer meet in the final at 9:00 pm at the main hall of Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher. The match will be held under the auspices of Said bin Abdullah al Balushi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development, in a showdown expected to reflect the tournament's stature as one of the premier competitions of the domestic season.

SEEB, CHASING AN EIGHTH CONSECUTIVE TITLE

Seeb enter the final with clear ambition to extend their dominance and claim an eighth consecutive Ministry Shield title an achievement that underlines the technical and administrative stability the club has enjoyed in recent years. Seeb were crowned champions last season after defeating Majees in straight sets.

On paper, Seeb hold a slight technical edge, bolstered by strong match readiness and extensive experience in finals. Their recent external participations, most notably in the West Asia Championship in Kuwait where they finished fifth, provided valuable competitive exposure and elevated their performance rhythm ahead of the decisive clash. The team relies on experienced players, powerful serving, and tactical discipline that has defined their campaign throughout the season.

AL BASHAYER, A CHANCE TO WRITE A NEW CHAPTER

On the other side, Al Bashayer approach the final determined to "turn the tables," seeking to avenge their straight-sets defeat to Seeb in the First Division League final and prove their ability to capture what would be a historic title for the club.

Al Bashayer reached the final following a series of strong performances that reflected notable development in collective play, both defensively and offensively, confirming they are not to be underestimated. The team understands that facing Seeb requires intense focus from the outset, efficient use of opportunities, and resilience in decisive moments against an opponent accustomed to handling the pressure of finals.

Seeb head coach Jamal al Maamari expressed his gratitude for reaching the final for the eighth consecutive time, stating that it reflects the team's stability and continuous hard work. He noted that Seeb have won seven consecutive titles out of 14 previous editions, and that winning the 15th edition would secure an eighth straight crown. He added that the team is fully prepared both technically and physically following recent external participations that elevated performance levels and provided valuable experience.

Regarding Al Bashayer, Al Maamari stressed that the final will be balanced and challenging against a strong side featuring national team players and high-level professionals, requiring full concentration until the end. He emphasised that the objective is to retain the title and deliver a performance worthy of Seeb's name.

Al Bashayer reached the final following a series of strong performances.

Sarhan Cup" for Purebred Arabians over 1,600 metres and sponsored by Marbat Al Reef Stud.

Thrilling wins at Al Rahba's 17th equestrian race meet

RIYADH ALBALUSHI
@riyadhbaluch

THE Oman Equestrian Federation and Racing organised the 17th race meeting of the 2025/2026 season at Al Rahba Racecourse in the Wilayat of Barka, featuring a distinguished lineup of Arabian and Thoroughbred horses across eight competitive races named after renowned Omani caves and landmarks.

In the opening race, "Kahf Tiq," Wahaj Al Wafi secured first place for owner Abdullah bin Salim al Rasbi with a strong finishing run.

The second race, "Kahf Al Kattan," saw Ammar Malik, owned by Abdulrahman bin Yousuf al Balushi, claim top honours following a composed and confident performance.

Race three, "Kahf Jarnan," for Purebred Arabians over 2,000 metres, was won by Mutashaddidah, owned by Husni bin Mubarak al Abri, trained by Sultan bin Mohammed al Balushi and ridden by Tariq bin Ibrahim al Azri, after a tactically sound display over the longer distance.

In race four, "Kahf Al Maql," a 2000-metre Thoroughbred contest, Agreet Did triumphed for owner Muneer bin Taib al Rasbi, trained by Hisham bin Zayed al Rasbi and ridden by Yahya bin Juma al Hamadani.

Race five, "Kahf Al Marnif," over 1600 metres for Thoroughbreds, was won by Jareelt Alaska, owned by Naji bin Khamis al Araimi, trained by Mousa bin Mohammed al Balushi and ridden by Issa bin Mohammed al Balushi.

The sixth race, "Kahf Al Hoota," for Purebred Arabians over 1,600 metres, was claimed by Al Asef S B, owned by Abdullah bin Khamis al Maskari, trained by Ahmed bin Salim al Abrawi and ridden by Al Mutasim bin Said al Balushi.

In the seventh race, the "Sarhan Cup" for Purebred Arabians over 1600 metres and sponsored by Marbat Al Reef Stud, Ibraaz Malik secured victory for owner Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Abdulrahman, trained by Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Balushi and ridden by Hamad bin Sultan al Malki.

The meeting concluded with race eight, "Kahf Majlis Al Jinn," over 1,600 metres for Purebred Arabians, where Izmir De Carrier, also owned by Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Abdulrahman and trained by Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Balushi, claimed first place under jockey Adam bin Talib al Balushi, bringing an exciting day of racing to a fitting close.

Ammar Malik, owned by Abdulrahman bin Yousuf al Balushi, claim top honours following a composed and confident performance.

"Kahf Majlis Al Jinn," over 1,600 metres for Purebred Arabians.

In race four, "Kahf Al Maql," a 2000-metre Thoroughbred contest, Agreet Did triumphed for owner Muneer bin Taib al Rasbi

South Africa's captain Aiden Markram (C) celebrates with teammates Ryan Rickelton and David Miller after their team's win at the end of the 2026 ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup Super Eights match between India and South Africa at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. ***— AFP***

SOUTH AFRICA THRASH INDIA, END 12-MATCH STREAK

SOUTH AFRICA ended India's 12-match winning streak at the T20 World Cup with a crushing 76-run win in Ahmedabad on Sunday in the opening Group 1 Super Eights match.

After a counter-attacking 63 by David Miller and some late hitting from Tristan Stubbs took South Africa to 187-7, the defending champions were all out for 111 in 18.5 overs, failing badly in their first chase of the tournament.

Left-arm quick Marco Jansen finished with 4-22, while left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj took 3-24 as the South African bowlers exposed India's fragile batting line-up.

Hot favourites to defend their crown on home soil, India will need to win their two remaining Super Eight games against Zimbabwe and the West Indies to have a chance of qualifying.

But the magnitude of the defeat means they will take a poor net run rate forward and that could prove pivotal if their Super Eights group is tight.

Both teams were unbeaten in group phase and the game was a rematch of the 2024 T20 World Cup final in Barbados, which India won.

India's unbeaten run in the tournament had stretched back to their defeat in the semi-final against eventual winners England in 2022. South Africa struck immediately in India's chase when captain Aiden Markram opened the bowling and dismissed Ishan Kishan with his off-spin.

Abhishek Sharma got his first runs of the tournament, after three ducks, with a four off Markram to get the 82,000 crowd on their feet in the cavernous stadium which has a reported capacity of 130,000.

India's captain Suryakumar Yadav walks back to the pavilion after his dismissal at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. ***— AFP***

The joy of Indian fans was short-lived as left-arm quick Marco Jansen had Tilak Varma caught behind for one in the next over and removed the left-handed Abhishek for 15.

India needed a partnership but Corbin Bosch dismissed Washington Sundar and skipper Suryakumar Yadav, who toe-ended to midwicket, as the hosts slumped to 51-5.

Left-arm spinner Maharaj took three wickets in one over to dismiss Hardik Pandya (18), Rinku Singh (0) and Arshdeep Singh (one) to shut the door on India. Shivam Dube made 42 at the end, but it was too little too late and when he fell, off Jansen, last man Jasprit Bumrah followed next ball.

Batting first after winning the toss, South Africa slipped to 20-3 before Miller and Dewald Brevis, who hit 45, put on 97, to guide South Africa to 187-7.

— AFP

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE 7,217.351

BUSINESS

SHORTTAKES

The ginger market in Oman will witness rapid growth, reaching 19% by 2028.

STRATEGIC STEP TO COMMERCIALISE OMANI GINGER CULTIVATION

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The Agricultural and Fisheries Development Fund has announced the start of this year's Omani ginger harvest season as part of a project to utilise modern technologies to develop specialised farms for producing cash vegetable crops in border regions with a comparative advantage.

Official indicators and economic reports recommend that the ginger market in Oman will witness rapid growth, reaching 19% by 2028, with a strategic focus on reducing reliance on imports and boosting local production using modern irrigation techniques.

Initial projections for the first phase indicate a production of 20 to 30 tonnes from a pilot area of approximately three acres.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources is working to connect farmers with the private sector to ensure the purchase and commercial marketing of the crop. The project opens up opportunities for investment and manufacturing, as there are profitable investment opportunities in processing ginger to produce essential oils, nutritional supplements; and dried and ground ginger.

Ginger production is primarily concentrated in the mountainous regions of Dhofar Governorate, including the Wilayats of Rakhyout and Dhalkout. Planting begins in mid-June and the crop continues to grow for eight to nine months until it is fully ripe for harvest.

Ginger cultivation in Oman is a promising economic project aimed at achieving several strategic gains within the framework of Oman Vision 2040. Its impact on the local economy lies in promoting economic diversification and food security, as well as localising tropical crops, thus reducing reliance on imports.

The crop is considered to be of high economic value due to increasing local and global demand in the food and pharmaceutical sectors, thereby adding value to the gross domestic product.

MSX plans CCP clearing model, securities lending

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

MUSCAT Stock Exchange (MSX) is working on a central counterparty (CCP) clearing model and securities lending and borrowing mechanisms as part of a 2026–2027 road map aimed at removing what it calls the key constraint holding back foreign allocations.

In an exclusive interview with the Observer, CEO Haitham bin Salim al Salmi said the main obstacle has "not been investor interest, but institutional allocability" — the ability of large global funds to deploy capital in a market that meets benchmark, liquidity and post-trade requirements.

Al Salmi said large mandates typically require sufficient liquidity depth, index eligibility and robust post-trade infrastructure, alongside execution capacity that can handle sizeable trades without excessive price disruption.

To address that, he said the exchange is working on implementing a central counterparty (CCP) model that would operate as an independent clearing entity, separate from the depository company, strengthening risk management and aligning the market with international best practices.

He added that MSX is also developing securities lending and borrowing mechanisms, arguing that as these structural elements mature, allocation barriers will diminish and the market can transition from an "opportunity set" to a more strategic portfolio allocation.

MSX is also developing securities lending and borrowing mechanisms, arguing that as these structural elements mature, allocation barriers will diminish and the market can transition from an "opportunity set" to a more strategic portfolio allocation.

HAITHAM BIN SALIM AL SALMI
CEO, MSX

Over the next 12–24 months, MSX expects continued listing activity aligned with the national economic agenda.

On listings, Al Salmi said expanding the investable universe remains a strategic objective, but noted that decisions on government divestments and privatisation are led by Oman Investment Authority and relevant stakeholders, while MSX's role is to operate the regulated marketplace facilitating listing, trading and price discovery in line with international standards.

Over the next 12–24 months, he said MSX expects continued listing activity aligned with the national economic agenda, with an emphasis on governance and appropriate free-float levels that support active trading and institutional participation.

He said the exchange is also developing the Promising Companies Market as a pathway for firms seeking capital markets funding, but stressed that the focus is "not on the number of listings, but on their investability" and contribution to depth and transparency.

Looking to market tools, Al Salmi said MSX's product sequence prioritises depth and resilience before complexity. The exchange is focused on broadening fixed income — including bonds and sukuk — to diversify funding channels and attract different investor classes.

He said exchange-traded funds will be introduced once liquidity conditions reach a "sufficient critical mass", while derivatives remain a longer-term consideration tied to market maturity and liquidity stability. Al Salmi framed the agenda as part of an institutional consolidation phase in which capital markets' role in financing the economy under Oman Vision 2040 is expected to deepen.

TRUMP SAYS US GLOBAL TARIFF RATE WILL RISE TO 15%

WASHINGTON: *President Donald Trump said on Saturday he will raise a temporary tariff from 10% to 15% on US imports from all countries, the maximum level allowed under the law, after the US Supreme Court struck down his previous tariff programme.*

The move came less than 24 hours after Trump announced a 10% across-the-board tariff on Friday after the court's decision.

The ruling found the president had exceeded his authority when he imposed an array of higher rates under an economic emergency law.

The new levies are grounded in a separate but untested law, known as Section 122, that allows tariffs up to 15% but requires congressional approval to extend them after 150 days.

No president has previously invoked Section 122 and its use could lead to further legal challenges.

Trade experts and congressional aides are skeptical the Republican-majority Congress would extend the tariffs, given polls that show growing numbers of Americans blame the duties for higher prices.

— Reuters

Port of Salalah achieves record general cargo volumes in 2025

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, FEB 22

General cargo volumes handled at the Port of Salalah — Oman's principal logistics hub on the Indian Ocean — surged 17% to a record 26.4 million tonnes in 2025, driven by rising exports of industrial minerals, notably gypsum and limestone.

This compares with 22.6 million tonnes recorded in 2024, according to Braik bin Musallam al Amri, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Salalah Port Services Co SAOG, who indicated that volumes are projected to climb further in 2026 on the back of multiple throughput-enhancement initiatives.

Against all challenges, the General Cargo Terminal achieved a record volume of 26.4 million metric tonnes", Al Amri said in the company's 2025 Annual Report. "The growth was driven mainly by dry bulk — gypsum and limestone — where demand remains firmly on an upward trajectory".

Rising gypsum and limestone exports helped lift general cargo volumes at Salalah Port.

He added that while general cargo volumes are expected to remain stable overall, dry bulk commodities will continue to underpin growth. Robust demand from construction and manufacturing sectors in India and Southeast Asia is set to sustain export momentum.

The port is also preparing for changes in the gypsum export value chain as Minerals Trading Oman SAOC (MTO) assumes the role of exclusive exporter of gypsum.

MTO, a wholly owned subsidiary of Minerals Development Oman SAOC, was established to serve as the dedicated commercial and marketing vehicle for Oman's mineral output, handling aggregation, marketing, sales and exports on behalf of MDO's portfolio companies and other local producers.

In line with this mandate, MTO is expected to assume sole responsibility for gypsum exports by June 2026. "We are working closely with all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition", Al Amri noted.

Additional growth is anticipated from higher breakbulk volumes and increased activity at the port's Container Freight Station (CFS). "As a result, total cargo volumes are expected to surpass 2025 levels by year-end", he said.

On the container side, the port handled 4.3 million TEUs in 2025, up from approximately 3.3 million TEUs in 2024. This increase was supported by the launch of the Gemini Cooperation between Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd, positioning Salalah as a key global hub within the network.

Al Amri added that any improvement in maritime traffic flows through the Red Sea and Suez Canal — disrupted for nearly two years amidst the Gaza conflict — would positively impact container volumes.

"With the container terminal upgrade now completed, we are fully equipped to accommodate the Gemini Network — the global vessel-sharing alliance between Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd — further strengthening Salalah's role as a strategic transshipment hub", he said.

The port also posted strong financial results in 2025, with consolidated revenue rising 28% year-on-year to RO 89.4 million. EBITDA climbed to RO 27.8 million, lifting the margin to 31% from 22% in 2024, while net profit increased to RO 7.3 million compared with RO 2.3 million a year earlier.

SHORT*TAKES*

For the past five years, growth has remained consistently above 25%.

AMOUAGE RETAIL SALES REACH $430 MILLION IN 2025

MUSCAT: *In 2025, Amouage, the Omani High Perfumery House achieved the strongest results in its 42-year history, recording +66% growth versus 2024. Global estimated retail sales reached $430 million, more than doubling over the past two years.*

For the past five years, growth has remained consistently above 25%, significantly outpacing the global perfumery market. This sustained performance confirms the structural strength of Amouage's craftsmanship-driven model, privileging creativity, technical mastery and cultural depth over convention.

Amouage remains first and foremost a house of creation. In 2025, artistic ambition translated directly into commercial performance, reaffirming that craftsmanship drives desirability.

THE EXCEPTIONAL EXTRAITS: REDEFINING INTENSITY

The Exceptional Extraits collection was the fastest-growing portfolio segment in 2025 (+157%), now representing more than a quarter of total sales. With creations positioned above $500, the collection confirms strong global appetite for higher concentrations, extended ageing and technical refinement.

Both Guidance 46 and Purpose 50 Exceptional Extraits consolidated their status as modern icons of High Perfumery. These creations elevate their Eau de Parfum counterparts and embody the House's pursuit of depth and precision.

FROM INNOVATIONS TO POWER FRANCHISES

The Odyssey Collection continued to evolve from innovation into structural strength. During the year, the collection more than doubled in size and now represents 35% of total sales, confirming its position as a defining pillar of the House.

The Odyssey Collection showcases how past innovations are transformed into power franchises. Established icons such as Guidance, which grew 2.2x year-on-year and Purpose, which expanded 3.3x, continued reinforcing the long-term relevance of the collection.

Decision and Existence Eaux de Parfum, the latest additions to the Odyssey, represented 25% of the collection's total sales, accelerating momentum across the portfolio behind sustained desirability and structural growth.

THE ESSENCES: TIME AS AN INGREDIENT

The Essences collection continued to redefine contemporary perfumery codes through its proprietary double infusion process, ageing perfume oils with sandalwood chips and bioethanol in oakwood barrels for six months. In 2025, Outlands became one of the fastest-growing recent creations of the House (+167%).

NATIONAL FINANCE UNVEILS RAMADHAN OFFERS ON AUTO FINANCING

MUSCAT: *National Finance, the Sultanate of Oman's leading finance company, has unveiled its exclusive Ramadhan proposition, featuring attractive offers across auto finance.*

Valid until March 31, 2026, the initiative is designed to support customers in fulfilling their mobility and lifestyle aspirations through enhanced affordability, convenience and value-driven benefits during the Holy Month.

The Ramadhan offer provides a full waiver of processing fees when

purchasing a new vehicle, along with approvals within 60 minutes, ensuring a smooth and efficient financing experience for customers. It also offers competitive financing rates and flexible repayment periods designed to meet various needs.

As part of the auto financing offer, financing is available for both new and used vehicles for individuals and small and medium-sized enterprises, with repayment periods of up to 12 years for individuals and up to 10 years for companies.

This makes National Finance the first finance and leasing company in the Sultanate of Oman to offer lower monthly installments through its flexible financing solutions.

Fulfill your dreams with 'The Lincoln Wishlist'

AS the holy month of Ramadhan approaches — a season of reflection, generosity and connection — Lincoln Oman is delighted to announce its most anticipated campaign of the year:

"The Lincoln Ramadhan Wishlist". This year, the dream of owning a world-class luxury SUV comes with an extraordinary suite of benefits designed to provide total peace of mind and an elevated ownership experience.

Running from February 10 to April 9, 2026, "The Lincoln Ramadhan Wishlist" offers customers an unparalleled value package on the Navigator, Nautilus and Corsair models. The campaign includes a comprehensive 5 Years/100,000 km Service (covering 10 services at 10,000 km intervals), a 5 Years/100,000 km Manufacturer's Warranty and 1 Year complimentary Registration. (Terms & Conditions Apply).

In the spirit of Ramadhan giving, Lincoln Oman is also adding an element of excitement to the season. Visitors who Test Drive a Navigator, Nautilus, or Corsair will enter a raffle draw to win one of two iPhone 17s. Furthermore, those who purchase a new Lincoln during the campaign period will enter a special "Buy & Win" draw for a chance to win the sleek iPhone 17 Air. Both raffle draws will be conducted on April 26, 2026.

"The Lincoln Ramadhan Wishlist" offers customers an unparalleled value package on the Navigator, Nautilus and Corsair models.

This Ramadhan, Lincoln's range of SUVs offers more than just transportation; they provide a "Quiet Flight" experience, blending power with a serene, spa-like environment.

The flagship Navigator commands the road with a new signature Front Light Bar and an illuminated Lincoln Star. Inside, the cabin is transformed into a personalised retreat featuring a class-leading 48-inch panoramic display and a 28-speaker Revel Ultima 3D audio system.

The Lincoln Nautilus is designed for those who value serenity. Its sleek profile is accented by 21-inch bright machined aluminium wheels on the Reserve trim.

The Corsair is the perfect expression of modern luxury for the spirited driver. Its turbocharged 2.0-litre engine produces 260 horsepower, offering a smooth yet responsive drive. The interior layout emphasises space and calm, featuring a 13.3-inch touchscreen powered by SYNC® 4.

Al Wathbah Ramadhan souq set to open on Feb 28

MUSCAT: Underscoring its ongoing commitment to corporate social responsibility and contributing to the development and growth of the local business sector, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, is pleased to announce that the 12th edition of the Al Wathbah Ramadhan souq is set for inauguration, welcoming the public from Thursday evening, February 26, until Saturday evening, February 28, 2026.

The souq will be held at the Bank Muscat's Head Office in Airport Heights, with the participation of approximately over 100 entrepreneurs including small business owners and home-based enterprises.

The souq will also feature engaging and diverse activities for both kids and adults alike, in addition to raffle draws offering prizes for adults over the course of three days, all within a vibrant Ramadhan atmosphere filled with community spirit and

The souq will be held at the Bank Muscat's Head Office in Airport Heights.

interaction.

Bank Muscat invites everyone to seize this special opportunity to visit the souq, enjoy the accompanying activities, support local businesses and participate in the raffle draws, in an experience that brings together the joy of shopping with the spirit of the holy month and the values of giving and family connection.

Al Wathbah Ramadhan souq is regarded as one of the most prominent events which the Bank organises during the holy month of Ramadhan, in cooperation with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority.

The souq provides a valuable platform for entrepreneurs, home-based business owners, as well as small and micro businesses to showcase their products directly to the public, opening new marketing opportunities while fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among participating businesses.

Visitors will be able to explore a wide range of locally-produced goods, including fashion and apparel, health and beauty products, accessories, food items, perfumes, as well as a variety of essentials for Eid Al Fitr. The souq will be open daily from 8:00 pm to 12:00 midnight.

Hilton Muscat Al Bandar unveils open-air 'Layali Ramadhan'

MUSCAT: Set along the coastline of Muscat, Layali Ramadhan at Hilton Muscat Al Bandar introduces an open-air setting that blends tradition, cuisine and community during the Holy Month.

Marking the property's first Ramadhan following its rebranding, the experience places a strong emphasis on outdoor dining, sea-breeze evenings and shared moments under the night sky. Guests can gather across the hotel's beachfront spaces where Ramadhan traditions unfold in a relaxed coastal atmosphere rather than conventional indoor venues.

At the centre of the culinary offering is Executive Chef Gurkan Gozyilmaz, whose menu reinterprets familiar Ramadhan flavours

The experience places a strong emphasis on outdoor dining, sea-breeze evenings and shared moments under the night sky.

with a contemporary touch.

Each evening, iftar is served at Al Tanoor restaurant both indoors and in the open-air sablah, allowing diners to enjoy the changing light and calm of the shoreline. The buffet features a wide range of Ramadhan favourites, including Wagyu beef shawarma, live grill stations with premium meat and seafood, traditional fatteh, freshly baked breads from the tandoor and an array of oriental mezze.

Guests can also enjoy a selection of Levantine and international desserts. Iftar is priced at RO 25 net per person, with complimentary dining for children below six and a 50 per cent reduction for those aged between six and eleven.

Beyond sunset, the beachfront transforms into a venue for group gatherings.

Families, corporate groups and community circles can host iftar or suhoor beside the sea, where long tables and open horizons create a distinctive Ramadhan setting. For groups of 40 or more, buffet-style iftar starts from RO 20 net per person, while suhoor begins at RO 15 net.

Later in the evening, suhoor takes on a quieter tone with an à la carte experience set against Arabic Omani tent-style décor along the beach — designed for conversation, reflection and peaceful moments before dawn.

With its open-air ambience, coastal views and renewed culinary direction, Layali Ramadhan offers guests a setting where traditions are celebrated and the spirit of togetherness defines the season.

Oman tops Asia in quality of life in Numbeo Index

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, FEB 22

THE Sultanate of Oman has emerged as one of the world's leading destinations for quality of life, ranking first in Asia and fourth globally in the Numbeo Quality of Life Index 2026, reinforcing its growing reputation as a competitive, safe and affordable place to live and do business.

According to the latest Numbeo release, Oman recorded a Quality of Life Index score of 207.6, placing it just behind the Netherlands, Denmark and Luxembourg.

It also ranked ahead of advanced economies such as Switzerland, Finland, Germany, Austria, Iceland and Norway in the global top 10.

From a business and investment perspective, Oman's strong performance is underpinned by a high Purchasing Power Index of 156.3, reflecting relatively strong household incomes against moderate costs.

This is complemented by a low Cost of Living Index of 43.6, one of the most competitive among countries in the global top tier.

Property affordability is a standout factor, with Oman posting a Property Price to Income Ratio of just 3.8, signalling accessible housing costs compared to many developed markets where ratios exceed 7 or even 10.

Oman's strong performance is underpinned by a high Purchasing Power Index of 156.3, reflecting relatively strong household incomes against moderate costs.

Safety remains a critical advantage. Oman scored 81.6 on the Safety Index, ranking among the safest countries globally.

For investors, professionals and expatriates, this stability is a key non-financial determinant influencing relocation decisions, talent attraction and long-term residency.

Healthcare indicators, while more moderate, remain competitive. Oman's Health Care Index stood at 63.5, broadly in line with several advanced and high-income economies.

Meanwhile, the Traffic Commute Time Index of 24.9 points to relatively manageable urban mobility, particularly when compared with major Asian financial hubs.

In the Asia-specific ranking, Oman leads decisively. It ranked ahead of Japan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Singapore, Taiwan and Cyprus.

Notably, while economies such as Singapore and Japan scored well in healthcare and purchasing power, higher living costs and property prices weighed on their overall rankings.

For Oman, the results align closely with national economic objectives under Oman Vision 2040, particularly efforts to enhance liveability, diversify the economy and position the country as a regional hub for investment, tourism and skilled talent.

The combination of affordability, safety and rising purchasing power strengthens Oman's value proposition at a time when global businesses are reassessing cost structures and quality-of-life considerations for regional headquarters.

As global competition for capital and human resources intensifies, Oman's performance in the Numbeo 2026 index signals not just social progress, but a growing strategic advantage in the international business landscape.

SHORTTAKES

The focus is on utilising accumulated experience.

OPAZ TAPS RETIRED TALENT THROUGH 'EXPERIENCES' INITIATIVE

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has launched the Experiences initiative, a new programme designed to harness the expertise of retired Omani professionals to support development across economic zones, free zones and industrial cities.

Unveiled during an OPAZ press conference, the initiative emerged from discussions at the Together Forward forum and aims to create a structured national database of expertise across multiple disciplines. The focus is on utilising accumulated experience in consultancy, project management, training and knowledge transfer to enhance institutional performance.

OPAZ said the initiative reflects its strategy to maximise the use of national talent, particularly retirees from the public and private sectors, while ensuring continuity of institutional knowledge and stronger integration between professional generations.

OPAZ said the initiative reflects its strategy to maximise the use of national talent, particularly retirees from the public and private sectors.

The database will capture academic qualifications, professional backgrounds and areas of specialisation, enabling OPAZ and zone administrations to engage national competencies according to specific operational needs and improve overall efficiency.

OPAZ invited interested professionals to register via its official website by completing the designated form and uploading their CVs. The Authority said the Experiences initiative represents a practical step towards transforming national expertise into tangible added value, supporting economic development and strengthening performance across projects and initiatives within the special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities overseen by OPAZ.

CBO REGULATES 'BUY NOW, PAY LATER' SERVICES

MUSCAT: *The Central Bank of Oman has issued new regulations governing the "Buy Now, Pay Later" (BNPL) service, marking a key step in organising the fast-growing financing model and ensuring its transparent and sound operation.*

The BNPL service enables consumers to obtain goods or services immediately while settling payments in instalments over a specified period, based on agreed terms. With the rapid expansion of this model, CBO said a clear regulatory framework is essential to balance financial innovation with consumer protection and overall financial stability.

The regulations apply to institutions licensed by thE CBO to offer BNPL services and set out comprehensive requirements covering licensing procedures, solvency standards, disclosure and transparency obligations, risk management frameworks, and consumer protection measures.

The move underscores CBO's commitment to regulating emerging financial services within a robust and forward-looking framework. ***— ONA***

Al Batinah South unveils agri-food investment drive

AL MUSANNAH: The Al Batinah South Governorate has opened more than 15 new investment opportunities in the agricultural and food sectors, reinforcing its push to strengthen food security and stimulate sustainable economic growth.

Announced by the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning, the opportunities are being offered through the Tatweer platform and cover projects across citrus and lemon farming, agricultural nurseries and fish farming.

The allocated land spans over 150 acres, leveraging the governorate's favourable environmental and natural conditions to boost local food production and improve sector efficiency.

The opportunities cover projects across citrus and lemon farming and fish farming.

Engineer Ahmed bin Saud al Kumyani, Director General of Housing and Urban Planning in Al Batinah South Governorate, said the initiative aligns with national directives to empower the private sector and expand investment in food security-related industries, in line with Oman Vision 2040.

He noted that the new package marks a qualitative shift in the use of land earmarked for agriculture and food production, adding that the Directorate is working closely with relevant authorities — particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources — to ensure a supportive regulatory and technical environment for investors.

Al Kumyani said the Tatweer platform provides a streamlined gateway for investors and entrepreneurs to access high-quality projects that enhance food self-sufficiency, strengthen supply chains and support the local economy, while also creating sustainable employment opportunities for residents.

He urged investors to apply through the platform, stressing that additional opportunities will be rolled out in the coming period to boost the governorate's competitiveness and support decentralisation and local development goals.

The initiative forms part of a broader strategy to diversify its economy, improve the investment climate, attract quality projects and support small and medium-sized enterprises, reinforcing the private sector's role in driving development. **— ONA**

POLICY UNCERTAINTY

Asia braces for new US tariffs

Asian economies are reassessing trade and investment risks after fresh US tariff moves reignited uncertainty.

Although a Supreme Court ruling struck down several Trump-era levies on Asian exporters, President Donald Trump swiftly announced new blanket import duties of up to 15% under a different law. Analysts warn the temporary 150-day measures could trigger further actions. ***— Reuters***

TRADE TENSIONS

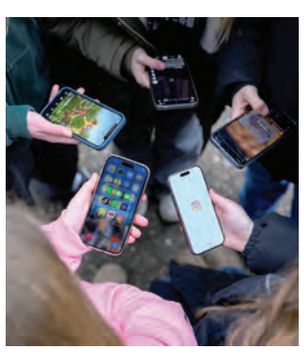
EU steel shipments to US slide

European steel exports to the US fell by 30% in the second half of 2025, hit by punitive 50% US tariffs. Data compiled by Eurofer shows shipments declined sharply despite a broader EU-US trade deal capping most tariffs at 15%.

Steel was excluded from the agreement and stalled talks have prolonged the dispute, deepening pressure on Europe's industrial sector and trade relations. ***— ONA***

AI EXPANSION

OpenAI eyes massive compute spend



OpenAI expects to spend about $600 billion on computing capacity through 2030 as it scales operations ahead of a potential IPO. The company reported $13 billion in 2025 revenue, exceeding forecasts.

Nvidia is nearing a $30 billion investment as part of a fundraising round that could value OpenAI at over $800 billion, one of the largest private raises ever. ***— Reuters***

Leadership fatigue: When decisions become automatic

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 leadership failure that does not announce itself. It does not arrive through scandal, poor judgment, or visible incompetence.

It arrives quietly, through routine. It is the moment when a leader stops deciding and starts reacting — when responses become reflexive rather than considered and when the complexity of a situation is no longer genuinely processed but simply matched to a familiar pattern.

This is leadership fatigue. Not the fatigue of exhaustion, though exhaustion often accompanies it. It is the fatigue of a decision-making system that has been running on autopilot for too long.

In high-pressure institutional environments, leaders face a relentless volume of decisions daily. The cognitive load is significant and sustained. Over time, the mind seeks efficiency.

It builds shortcuts — heuristics shaped by previous experience, successful outcomes and organisational expectations. These shortcuts are not failures of intelligence. They are a natural adaptation to complexity. The problem begins when shortcuts replace thinking entirely and when the map is mistaken for the territory.

When this happens, decisions that once required careful analysis begin to feel instinctive. Leaders convince themselves that speed reflects confidence and that hesitation reflects weakness. The organisation reinforces this belief at every level. Boards reward decisiveness. Teams expect certainty. The culture quietly penalises the leader who pauses to question what everyone else assumes is already settled. Gradually, the space for genuine deliberation shrinks until it disappears entirely.

What follows is a slow but consequential drift. The quality of decisions does not collapse suddenly — it erodes gradually. Each automatic response locks in a slightly narrower view of the situation. Each unchallenged assumption builds another layer of institutional rigidity.

The leader remains technically functional while becoming strategically inert. And because the organisation continues to operate, no alarm is raised. The system looks healthy from the outside precisely when it is most vulnerable from within.

This pattern is particularly costly in sectors where conditions shift faster than institutional memory can absorb. In energy, financial services and public sector reform, the landscape of 2026 does not resemble the landscape of five years ago.

Yet many decisions made today are built on frameworks designed for that earlier reality. The decision is made quickly. The logic feels sound. The meeting moves on. And somewhere in that efficiency, relevance is quietly lost.

Leadership fatigue is also self-concealing. A fatigued leader rarely recognises the condition from the inside. The volume of decisions creates the illusion of engagement. The familiarity of the process creates the illusion of control. Colleagues rarely challenge a leader whose decisions have historically worked.

In high-pressure institutional environments, leaders face a relentless volume of decisions daily. The cognitive load is significant and sustained.

The absence of visible failure becomes the justification for continuing without reflection. Success, paradoxically, becomes the environment in which fatigue grows most comfortably.

What distinguishes genuinely effective leadership at senior levels is not the ability to decide quickly under pressure. Most experienced leaders can do that.

It is the discipline to slow down deliberately to treat a familiar-looking problem as if it might not be familiar at all. It is the habit of returning to first principles even when the pattern seems obvious, especially when the pattern seems obvious.

Organisations that understand this invest not in accelerating their leaders' decisions, but in protecting the quality of the conditions under which those decisions are made. They build cultures where uncertainty is permitted, where challenge is not treated as disloyalty and where the pace of response does not override the depth of analysis. Speed without clarity is not efficiency, it is controlled drift.

When decisions become automatic, what is lost is not speed. What is lost is judgment. And judgment, once quietly surrendered to habit, is remarkably difficult to reclaim.

THE SUPREME COURT IGNITES A NEW TARIFF FRENZY

GABRIEL RUBIN

"Liberation Day" tariffs didn't even make it to their first anniversary. The bewildering bevy of levies imposed under emergency powers by the Trump administration in April shook the global trade system and led to months of extensions, deals, escalatory threats and ruptures.

The US Supreme Court ruled on Friday that the president lacked authority under statute for any of it. The rejection alone doesn't end the ad hoc gamesmanship, though: only Congress can do that.

Much damage has been done. Though the ruling doesn't address the issue, some $175 billion of collected duties, according to a Wharton School estimate, may now have to be refunded.

Importers of all sizes, from major retailers like Costco to family-owned toy manufacturers, have filed claims.

Furthermore, Trump can try to seek alternate authority to cobble together replacement levies.

The powers under which he imposed tariffs related to steel and aluminium, or those related to national security, are unaffected.

In a press conference following the court's decision, the president said that he would utilise Section 122, which allows for across-the-board rates for up to five months, to impose a new 10% global penalty.

Ultimately, for Trump and for governments negotiating against him, what may matter most is whether legislators assert their primacy over trade, now reaffirmed by the court. They have shown signs of stirring recently.

Republican leaders' attempted blockade against votes disapproving of tariffs failed earlier this month.

For now, backbenchers don't seem ready to break from the president en masse. While resolutions attacking levies passed, they garnered just token support from the governing party, far short of the two-thirds majority necessary to override a possible veto from the White House. To really reclaim trade policy, many more legislators must be ready to act.

The opportunity will not get more obvious. A 6-3 majority opinion written by Chief Justice John Roberts — joined, notably, by two Trump appointees — places trade authority clearly within lawmakers' purview.

The Congressional Budget Office and New York Federal Reserve alike say in new studies that consumers bear more than 90% of the burden of tariffs. Midterm elections loom in November, while Trump's approval rating on his handling of the economy stands at just 34%, according to a poll released this week.

Failure to move now could simply hand the reins to a very different Congress next year.

— Reuters

From screens to books: Sweden's shift in policy

IT is alarming to see a generation that is digitally proficient but lacks fundamental knowledge due to heavy digitalisation.

A recent study shows that, for the first time in history, a new generation may score lower on standardised academic and cognitive measures than their predecessors.

The study results posit that shorter attention spans, social media influence and dynamic shifts in the educational system and parenting practices have led to a decline in the reasoning faculty.

As the world moves towards digitalisation and automation across industries, Sweden has quietly taken a step back to move forward in global education policy.

For many years, Sweden adopted tablets and screens in schools, but has now reversed its policy and started reinvesting in more traditional, structured forms of instruction, such as handwriting and printed textbooks.

Sweden experienced intensified stakeholder concerns about a decline in reading performance and excessive screen time from 2021 to 2023. There was widespread criticism of digitalisation in Swedish schools.

Many government officials also spoke publicly about the widening of learning gaps and how excessive screen time is eroding children's cognitive abilities and concentration in basic literacy.

The reason for Sweden's shift in education policy stemmed from alarming performance among learners in reading, writing and math.

Research shows that excessive exposure to devices during a child's early years can affect and harm their concentration, handwriting and deep learning capabilities.

Many sections of society raised their voices about the impact of increased screen time on children's sleep, anxiety, attention span and overall wellbeing.

Sweden's policy reform indicates that governments are taking notice of the alarming risk of a possible cognitive catastrophe among learners through a constructive, actionable policy recalibration.

The policy focuses on preschool and compulsory schooling, covering the age group of one to sixteen.

DR MYTHILI KOLLURU

The writer is an assistant professor, marketing and management department

Sweden's response to excessive digitalisation is an institutional effort to redesign teacher-education programmes to balance human and digital skills. The policy focuses on preschool and compulsory schooling, covering the age group of one to sixteen.

In 2023, Sweden subsidised textbooks; in 2024 they passed a law guaranteeing every learner access to proper printed teaching material.

In 2025, Sweden made it compulsory for schools to have staffed and well-equipped libraries. From July 2026, national tests in year three will remain a pen-and-paper exam.

Sweden has decided to impose a nationwide ban on mobile phones during school days from July 2026, subject to legislative implementation and preparation.

The government has also made amendments to the pre-school curriculum, so that it is no longer mandatory for learners to use digital tools for learning and that, for children under the age of two, only analogue learning tools such as books should be implemented.

To strengthen learners' foundations in reading, writing and arithmetic, compulsory schooling will run from age six to sixteen (10 years) from 2028.

There is a broader reform package that aims to modernise the curriculum across STEM and AI to mitigate learning gaps and promote and strengthen vocational pathways, which will be implemented in a phased manner from 2026 to 2030.

Unesco's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) team reports that, as of 2024, 79 educational institutions worldwide have introduced some form of smartphone restriction.

Many other countries are experiencing similar challenges and some have introduced bans or strict restrictions on smartphones in schools.

In Europe, this development is seen in France, Italy, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain and Luxembourg.

In South Korea, there is a nationwide ban on smartphones in schools and in China, students need parental consent to use mobile phones in class. India has tightened restrictions on mobile phone usage, without a nationwide ban.

In North America, Chile and Brazil; and in many schools in the USA, rules have been introduced to limit phone use. The UAE Ministry of Education has banned students from bringing mobile phones to school.

CLASSIFIEDS

SIT. WANTED

SALES professional with 5 yrs Experience in Medical sector. Graduate, Available in Muscat. akhilmanu777@gmail.com Contact: 76323324

INDIAN male, 10 year experience in Oman as Coordinator have Driving licence. 90789282

INDIAN electrical engineer more than 20 years experience in "MEP" construction field in Oman seeks suitable job. Contact: 92919281

ACCOUNTS/ SALES Indian male (b com) having 2+ years of experience in India accounts sales looking for suitable placement, join immediately. Contact: 76324360

15+ experience in building material, project sales & Trade market, deal with corporate project customers, looking for a suitable job. Contact 78384283

INDIAN male MBA Graduate with 15yrs experience in Oman seek suitable senior position in finance office admin., sales DTC. Contact: 94158080

LOOKING for SUPPLY CHAIN / SALES jobs Indian male 24 years. Commerce graduate, Experience in logistics, procurement and sales in reputed company in Oman.Valid Oman D/L. Contact +96891121694, issacantony2002@gmail.com

OPERATIONS Support / Tendering / Contract Management / Procurement professional with 18+ years' Oil & Gas experience. NOC & driving license available. 96227272, jijilmathew@gmail.com

LOGISTICS Documentation Executive. Indian male, 25 years, BBA, PG Diploma in Logistics & SCM and have 2 years of experience in this field. Seeking a position in Logistics field Mob: +968 7506 9882 Mail: shafazhussain18@gmail.com

INDIAN male civil engineer with more than 30 years experience in different ministers, seek immediate suitable position. CONTACT: 94158080

LOOKING for part time OR full time Accounts/ Finance job. 20yrs experience in Muscat. Upto finalization & Audit. Please contact: 92065499

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (Cockroaches), Public Health Chemicals, Agriculture Chemicals, Snake Repellent, Rodent Baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

COCKROACH, BEDBUG, SNAKE, RODENT, TERMITE, FLIES

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

Job Vacancy

ELECTRICAL PROJECT ENGINEER

We are actively seeking a Highly skilled Electrical Engineer to join our Team. The ideal candidate should have a minimum of 8 years of experience in 33/11 KV Substations. Candidates with Oman working experience will be preferred for this Position.

Key Requirements: -
- Should have an Engineering Degree in Electrical Engineering.
- Minimum 8 Years of working experience as an Electrical Engineer.
- Should have a wide knowledge / experience in the field of 33/11 Kv.

If you meet the above requirements, we encourage you to apply for this position by sending your Updated CV along with a cover letter to hr@aljood-oman.com

SIT. VACANT

URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR CONTRACTING COMPANY

1- Electrical Foreman.
2- Civil foreman (Experience in Piping work).
3- Civil Supervisor.
Contact @Mr.Mohmmaed GSM : 92563101
send CV to mohammed92563101@gmail.com

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Panchakarma, Yoga, Kalari, Massage Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Marma Therapy & Post Delivery Care

Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khuwair Service Road, Near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-King
Tel: 24475280, GSM: 95371664, 92504980, Website: www.siddhayur.com

We are Hiring
Sales & Application Specialist

- Omani Nationals only
- Nursing / Phlebotomy background
- Minimum 2 years' experience in Oman Market
- Fluent in English (Arabic Native)
- Sales Experience Preferred

Please email your CV at: rajeev@astonmedicals.com

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com
ORBIT Car Rental & Lease

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

SIT. WANTED

LOOKING for Pipeline Engineer with 8 Years Experience offer salary: 200 OMR
Phone : +96896965333
Email : sultanalhabsi701@gmail.com

SIT. VACANT

A CONSUMER goods distribution company FMCG headquartered in Muscat with several branches across the Sultanate of Oman is seeking qualified candidates for the following positions:

- National Sales Manger
- Marketing Manager
- Sales Representative
- Product Display Specialist (Merchandiser).

Please send your CV to the email address below. ssagriculture25@gmail.com

FOR RENT

10000 sqm plus area of open yard fully blacktop with compound wall, wide gate & CCTV for immediate rent in Jifnain. Contact: 99853040

4 Ready made office space for rent in Bank Melli Iran building MBD area Ruwi, opposite Centre point. Contact: 99011352.

SIT. WANTED

SALES Executive required For working in oil and gas / building materials industry Vehicle Driving license preferred Email: kirit@bustaninternational.com Mobile: 95544641

SIT. WANTED

ACCOUNTS/ Finance: Indian male (MBA Fin) having more than 19 years of experience in Oman accounts & finance looking for suitable placement, NOC available and can join immediately. Contact: 92076716

LOOKINg for part time or full time Accounts/ Finance job. 20yrs experience in Muscat. Upto finalization & Audit. Please contact: 92065499

OMAN DAILY Observer

FREE* CLASSIFIEDS

• SITUATION WANTED

* NOW FREE CLASSIFIED IN OMAN DAILY OBSERVER ON THE ABOVE CATEGORIES ONLY

Send your advertisement (Only one per coupon & no photocopies), either by mail or in person, with your local identity.

To advertise please contact:
Tel: 71455532/ 71455531/ 71455530
Email: adv@omaninfo.om

SALE OF USED VEHICLES

Offers are invited for the purchase of the above individual vehicles,with preference given to the highest bidder. RFQs available at the Khimji Ramdas Automotive Workshop, Ghala.
*Images are representative

92490953

To advertise in Ministry of Information channels

To advertise | 71455532- 71455531- 71455530 | adv@omaninfo.om | izdihar_info izdihar.info

izdihar IZDIHAR_INFO

Ramadhan

FAITH IN THE **DIGITAL AGE**

HAS SOCIAL MEDIA STOLEN RAMADHAN'S SERENITY?

BALQEES AL ORAIMI

RAMADHAN has long held a special place in Omani society, defined not only by fasting but by stillness, reflection, and spiritual balance. In recent years, however, social media has quietly entered this sacred space. From Suhoor to iftar, screens accompany believers, prompting a cultural question: has digital engagement reshaped the essence of Ramadhan?

In Oman, where Ramadhan traditions are rooted in family, community, and faith, the shift is subtle yet clear. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube have transformed the holy month into a season of constant content, daily reminders, Qur'an recitations, motivational posts, cooking videos, and themed challenges. While much of it carries positive intent, the volume and speed invite reflection on its spiritual impact.

Social media offers easy access to faith and inspiration, but constant scrolling can turn reflection into passive consumption. Mindful use and balance are key to preserving spiritual focus

At its best, social media broadens access to religious knowledge. Young Omanis, in particular, can now access sermons and reflections once limited to mosques or lectures. Faith has become more accessible, allowing engagement anytime and anywhere. For some, digital spaces even spark deeper religious awareness.

Yet a paradox emerges. Ramadhan encourages slowing down and retreating from excess, while social media thrives on speed and constant stimulation. Scrolling, even through religious content, can turn worship into passive consumption rather than active reflection.

Culturally, Ramadhan is also increasingly displayed online. Acts of charity, night prayers and family Iftars are documented and shared. While such posts may inspire others, they raise questions about intention. When spirituality becomes content, does sincerity risk fading?

In Oman's values-driven society, this tension matters. Ramadhan traditionally strengthens offline bonds through communal prayers and shared meals. Growing reliance on digital interaction may gradually replace physical presence with virtual affirmation.

Influencers often feel pressure to remain active, turning the month into a performance rather than a pause. Followers may internalise unrealistic standards of productivity and devotion, fostering comparison instead of connection.

Still, social media is not inherently harmful. The challenge lies in balance. Used mindfully, technology can complement Ramadhan. Limiting screen time and prioritising offline worship can restore harmony.

Ramadhan is ultimately about discipline, including how we manage attention. Preserving its serenity may depend not on rejecting technology, but on redefining our relationship with it.

FATWA
QUESTION & ANSWER

Shaikh Dr Kahlan Al Kharousi

Assistant Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman

QUESTION

An elderly sick man, who is very poor, couldn't fast in the past two years and he is not able to feed others to compensate for the missing days during Ramadhan. What should he do?

ANSWER

If he cannot feed people because of a certain inability, Allah will forgive him. "Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear". (surat Al Baqarah/verse 286)

QURAN
VERSE OF THE DAY

{ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَن يُخَفِّفَ عَنكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنسَانُ ضَعِيفًا}

Allah (God) wants to lighten things for you, since man was created weak!

[Surat Al Nisa]-Verse 28

HADITH
A GUIDE FOR THE FAITHFUL

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

"Three are the signs of a hypocrite: When he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he betrays his trust."

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Ramadhan

BALANCING BOOKS AND BLESSINGS

STUDENTS EMBRACE RAMADHAN WITH FAITH AND DEDICATION

DR P V KHAN

THE holy month of Ramadhan brings with it a unique energy on the campus of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Sur — one where the call to prayer blends seamlessly with the pursuit of knowledge, and where students find a deeper meaning in both fasting and learning.

As the crescent moon heralded the arrival of Ramadhan, Applied Biotechnology (ABT) final year students Taqwa, Hajar and Khaleel had already been hard at work for a full week. With careful planning and quiet determination, the trio set up all their laboratory experiments well in advance, ensuring that their academic responsibilities were fulfilled before the holy month began. Their goal was heartfelt and simple — to spend the first days of Ramadhan at home, sharing Iftar and Suhoor with their families around the same table.

"We did not want to choose between our studies and our family," Taqwa and Hajar shared. "So we made sure there was no conflict to begin with."

This spirit of thoughtful preparation was not limited to the biotechnology labs. Over in the Entomology Subject, student Mohammed began collecting insect specimens an entire week before practical classes were scheduled to begin. His reasoning was clear — by having everything ready in advance, the practical sessions would run smoothly throughout Ramadhan without any disruption, delay, or compromise in quality. For Mohammed, skipping effort was never an option. He simply reorganised it.

The approach these students have taken reflects a broader philosophy rooted in the very foundation of their faith. The Holy Quran commands Iqra — Read. Learn. Seek knowledge. This single word, the first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), has inspired generations of Muslim scholars, scientists and thinkers to see education not as separate from their faith, but as an expression of it. Today's students at UTAS-Sur carry that tradition forward.

Ramadhan is a month of reflection, honesty and character building

University authorities have supported this balance with sensitivity and care. Study hours during the spring semester, which begins in February, have been thoughtfully adjusted to conclude by 2 pm, giving students enough time to rest, pray and prepare for Iftar without exhaustion. It is a small but meaningful gesture that acknowledges the spiritual lives of students alongside their academic ones.

The daily rhythms on campus shift gracefully during Ramadhan. Female students tend to wrap up their activities early in the afternoon, heading home to join their mothers and sisters in preparing the evening Iftar meal — a tradition that carries deep cultural warmth. The young men, meanwhile, channel their energy into making all the necessary arrangements for Iftar gatherings, ensuring that the spirit of togetherness is honoured fully.

Research continues, classes run and practical sessions proceed — but with an added layer of mindfulness.

Ramadhan, as these students understand it, is far more than a month of fasting. It is a month of reflection, of honesty, of character building. It tests patience, sharpens focus and strips away distraction — qualities that, perhaps not coincidentally, also make for better students and better scientists. The hunger of the body, they find, often sharpens the hunger of the mind.

Through it all, faculty members remain steady pillars of support, adjusting their expectations with wisdom and encouraging their students with understanding rather than pressure.

At UTAS-Sur this Ramadhan, no dream is being put on hold. The experiments are set. The insects are collected. The Iftar tables will be full. And the books remain open.

RAMADHAN TWEETS

زينة بنت سيف الراشدي
@Zainh_Saif
X.com

Translated from Arabic by Grok

Mashallah to the Omani photographers

So talented ❤️

Rate this translation:

Jamea Al Islam stands as a formidable architectural wonder in Muscat.

الشهبندر
@FakherOmani
Follow

Translated from Arabic by Grok

Between the palm gardens and the call of the minarets, Surur Walk shines in the Wilayat of #Samail 🌴🕌

A scene that blends the serenity of the place with the beauty of nature, and a path where souls are refreshed before bodies.

Here footsteps walk in calm... and the heart blossoms with tranquility 💚🇴🇲✨

#RamadanMubarak #SultanateOfOman

Rate this translation:

Surur Walkway, an outstanding destination during Ramadhan.

PROMINENT OMANI FIGURES

Who is he?
Abu Abdullah Muhammad Abdullah al Azdi

A scholar of jurisprudence and an Arab physician known for his early alphabetical medical writings, was born in Suhar, Oman, in 1033 CE. Among his most notable works is Kitab al Ma' (The Book of Water), a medical encyclopedia in which he documented numerous diseases and their names.

RAMADHAN TRADITION

In a beautiful act of worship and good deeds, many Muslims in Cameroon will make it a practice of opening their doors right before iftar time, to invite anyone from outside who may need to find somewhere to break their fast.

HEALTH TIPS

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

Eat a variety of foods during the evening. Now, more than ever, your body needs good nourishment to compensate for the stress of fasting. Whole grains, vegetables, fruits, lean protein, healthy fat (fat from plants, like olive oil and nuts)—all of these are important to give your body all the nutrients it needs.

SUSTAINABLE IFTAR: FIGHTING FOOD WASTE THIS RAMADHAN

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

AT sunset across Muscat, tables fill quickly. Dates are passed, soups are poured, and platters of rice, grilled meats and sweets arrive in generous abundance.

In homes, hotels and Ramadhan tents, hospitality is expressed through generosity. Yet by the end of the evening, trays scraped half-finished and plates piled high with leftovers often tell a quieter story. In a month rooted in restraint, the paradox is difficult to ignore: can Ramadhan, a time of spiritual discipline, also become an opportunity for Oman to confront food waste?

Globally, food waste has reached unprecedented levels. The United Nations Environment Programme estimates that 1.05 billion tonnes of food were wasted worldwide in 2022, representing 19 per cent of food available to consumers, with households responsible for around 60 per cent of the total, or roughly 79 kilogrammes per person per year.

Beyond the ethical implications, UNEP further estimates that food waste accounts for 8 to 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, largely due to methane released from landfills.

In the Gulf region, consumption patterns intensify during Ramadhan. Regional assessments suggest that food waste can increase by 25 to 50 per cent during the holy month compared to other months of the year. While comprehensive Ramadhan - specific data for Oman remains limited, national figures highlight the scale of the broader issue.

According to Be'ah, Oman's integrated waste management company, the Sultanate of Oman generates more than 1.7 million tonnes of municipal solid waste annually, with organic waste forming a substantial portion of the total stream.

The resource footprint behind that waste is significant. The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that producing one kilogramme of rice requires approximately 2,500 litres of water, while one kilogramme of beef can require up to 15,000 litres of water.

Oman is exploring ways to align Ramadhan traditions with sustainability — through charities, mindful serving, and household practices that turn reflection into action

When such food is discarded, the embedded water, land and energy resources are lost. This is a critical concern for arid countries facing rising water stress.

The climate dimension is equally urgent. Methane, produced when organic waste decomposes in landfills, has a global warming potential more than 80 times stronger than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. Reducing food waste is therefore recognised internationally as one of the fastest and most cost-effective climate mitigation strategies (UNEP, 2024).

Ramadhan emphasises moderation, gratitude and empathy for those with less. Islamic teachings discourage extravagance and wastefulness, reinforcing values that align closely with modern sustainability principles. Yet social expectations surrounding hospitality can encourage over-preparation, particularly when hosts fear under-serving guests.

There are signs of gradual change.

Across Oman, charities and volunteer groups expand meal distribution initiatives during Ramadhan, redirecting surplus food to low-income workers and families in need.

Community fridges in some neighbourhoods facilitate safe sharing of excess meals. Some hospitality operators have begun refining buffet systems by using smaller serving trays replenished more frequently, analysing historical consumption data and coordinating redistribution where regulations permit.

At the household level, small behavioural shifts can yield measurable impact. Planning menus, moderating portion sizes, creatively reusing leftovers for Suhoor and coordinating with neighbours can significantly reduce avoidable waste.

Public awareness campaigns that connect religious values with environmental responsibility may further reinforce the message that sustainability is not separate from faith but deeply aligned with it.

As Oman advances its environmental commitments under Vision 2040 and broader sustainability frameworks, reducing organic waste becomes part of a larger national conversation about resource efficiency, climate resilience and responsible consumption.

Ramadhan, a month already devoted to reflection and discipline, offers a uniquely powerful opportunity to align spiritual intention with environmental action.

SCIENTIFIC **RESEARCH**

APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

BUTHAINA AL RIYAMI

Anxiety does not always scream loudly. Sometimes it whispers quietly in the lives of those affected; haunting sleep in silence, sending thoughts at a troubling pace, or creating a persistent sense of unease that has no clear name.

A new Omani publication seeks to reduce sudden surges of anxiety by helping readers recognise and respond to these moments.

Al-Daleel Al-Nafsi li-Al-Tahakkum bil-Qalaq (Kayfa Atahakkam bi-Qalaqi?) — The Psychological Guide to Controlling Anxiety (How Do I Control My Anxiety?) is the result of years of clinical work and shared aspirations of five Omani mental health specialists whose doors are constantly knocked on by individuals burdened with the fears they carry.

Dr Yahya al Kalbani, Dr Tamadhur al Mahrouqi, Dr Al Khateeb al Saadi, Dr Ameera al Kindi and Omaima al Rasbi came together to realise their shared vision of blending scientific research and psychological theory with applied practice in a book that provides readers with clear, practical steps to manage anxiety within a culturally relevant context.

The book goes beyond being a typical scientific text about anxiety; it is designed as a hands-on workbook. It offers a step-by-step guide, providing insight into anxiety, its triggers, and ways to respond with resilience. The book features practical exercises, reflection prompts, and scientifically backed coping strategies.

"The book aims to bridge theory and practice by presenting accessible frameworks grounded in current psychological research while remaining relevant to practitioners, educators, and families. " Dr Yahya al Kalbani, the corresponding author, clearly states their book's aim.

One of the earliest exercises in the book asks readers to identify their personal baseline, serving as a wake-up call that allows them to glimpse the triggers and underlying causes of anxiety, rather than remaining captive to fear itself. This exercise raises awareness by highlighting the reality that many people focus on the feeling of fear and their reactions to it, while overlooking the triggers and causes that fuel it.

Alongside many other worksheets with different purposes, the book also extends an invitation for readers to write freely about their fears without editing or judgement, to rate their anxiety levels, and to track how these levels shift over time.

Although anxiety is one of the most common psychological challenges, it is also one of the most treatable. This guide is designed to provide step-by-step strategies and tools that readers can use anytime, anywhere. It is suitable for readers whether they are working with a therapist or practicing independently. However, in the introduction, the authors stress that the book does not replace professional support for severe cases.

Rather than relying solely on imported clinical language, the authors draw on their experience with Omani patients, where anxiety often appears quietly — through physical symptoms, silence, or constant worry rather than direct emotional expression. While the authors ground their advice in established global clinical practices and methods, they deliberately avoid depending exclusively on external frameworks. They draw heavily on their professional experience with Omani patients, where anxiety often manifests quietly through physical symptoms or silence, rather than direct emotional expression. This approach sets the book apart through its relatability, cultural sensitivity, and carefully tailored adaptation to Oman's local context.

Another powerful distinguishing aspect of the book is its embrace of readers' emotions, self-competence, and cognitive patterns through thoughtfully designed exercises. These activities encourage readers not to shy away from their emotions. Readers are invited to write about their fears, rate their anxiety levels, and even draw or describe their feelings in a dedicated "personal space" section. This reflects a core principle of psychological counselling: clients are not passive observers, but active participants in their own healing.