

07

RAMADHAN
1447 AH
WEDNESDAY
FEB 25, 2026

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR

05:17 AM

DHUHR

12:25 PM

ASR

03:44 PM

MAGHRIB

06:13 PM

ISHA

07:23 PM

INBRIEF

HM’S GREETINGS TO EMIR OF KUWAIT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Shaikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, on his country’s National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health, happiness and well-being to Shaikh Mishal. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty for the return of this occasion on Shaikh Mishal and the people of Kuwait at a time they realise aspirations of further progress and prosperity.



OMANI TEACHER’S DAY CELEBRATED

The Sultanate of Oman on Tuesday commemorated Omani Teacher’s Day, observed annually on February 24, in a celebration that reaffirms the teaching profession’s indispensable role in shaping generations and advancing the eternal values of knowledge and learning throughout the nation. His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik accords profound and sustained attention to teachers, ensuring comprehensive support for the educational process, continuously developing pedagogical tools and methodologies, and strategically positioning the sector to keep pace with rapid technological transformations. **DETAILS ON P2**

Part of Sultan Haitham City’s first phase to launch this year

MUSCAT: A part of the first phase of Sultan Haitham City is expected to be opened this year, with infrastructure and service works advancing and around 1,700 housing units already sold, according to Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning.

Addressing the maiden Ramadhan lecture hosted by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Monday, he said the Sultan Haitham City project targets about 20,000 housing units in total, at a pace of roughly 1,000 units annually, adding that infrastructure



Sultan Haitham City project targets about 20,000 housing units in total.

Eid Al Fitr likely to be celebrated on March 20

SHADDAD AL MUSALMY
MUSCAT, FEB 24

Eid Al Fitr in Oman is likely to be celebrated on March 20 (Friday) as per astronomical calculations. This joyous occasion marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan, and Omanis are expecting a five-day holiday to indulge in festivities and spend quality time with loved ones.

“The crescent moon is expected to be sighted on the evening of Thursday (March 19), which would confirm Eid Al Fitr on Friday (March 20),” said Board Member of Oman Space and Astronomical Society Abdulwahab al Busaidy.

“This year will be much easier for astronomers around the world to



A boy reads the Holy Quran at a mosque on Tuesday.
Photo by **Abdulwahid Al Hamdani**

know when Eid Al Fitr will fall. The moon will be easily seen on Thursday (March 19) across the world. As a result, all countries, including Oman and neighbouring countries, and most of the Islamic countries and possibly the entire Muslim world will have the first day of Eid Al Fitr on March 20,” Al Busaidy said.

Many in Oman are anticipating a five-day holiday that includes the weekend. Holidays are expected to begin from Thursday (March 19) to Monday (March 23).

The holiday season will bring government offices, schools and most businesses to a close, allowing everyone to come together and celebrate the spirit of giving, forgiveness and gratitude.

Call for sanctions against Israel over West Bank moves

PALESTINIANS on Tuesday called for sanctions against Israel, welcoming a joint condemnation by nearly 20 countries of new Israeli measures aimed at tightening control over the occupied West Bank.

Israel has approved a series of initiatives this month backed by far-right ministers, including launching a process to register land in the West Bank as “state property” and allowing Israelis to purchase land there directly.

Late on Monday, 18 countries, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and European powers France and Spain, slammed Israel over the recent moves.

They “are part of a clear trajectory that aims to change the reality on the ground and to advance unacceptable de facto annexation”, the countries said.

“Such actions are a deliberate and direct attack on the viability of the Palestinian state and the implementation of the two-state solution.” Hamas hailed the condemnation as “a step in the right direction in confronting the occupation’s expansionist plans, which flagrantly violate international law and relevant UN resolutions”.

The group in a statement urged the countries involved “to impose deterrent sanctions and exert pressure on the occupation government to halt its policies aimed at entrenching annexation, colonial



A boy pulls a water container along a muddy road after heavy rain at the Bureij camp for Palestinian refugees in the central Gaza Strip on Tuesday. — **AFP**

settlement and forced displacement”.

It said the Israeli measures were part of ongoing “aggression” against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Meanwhile, more than a dozen international humanitarian organisations have petitioned Israel’s Supreme Court to block an imminent order that would force 37 NGOs to cease operations in Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem, warning of catastrophic consequences for civilians.

Organisations including Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Oxfam, the Norwegian Refugee Council and CARE were notified on December 30, 2025 that their Israeli registrations had expired and that they had 60 days to renew them by providing lists of their Palestinian staff.

If they fail to do so, they will have to cease operations in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, including east Jerusalem, from March 1.

The petition, described as unprecedented in its scale and joint nature, seeks an urgent interim injunction from Israel’s top court to suspend the closures pending full judicial review. The 17 petitioners, which include some of the NGOs hit by the ban, argue the Israeli measures are incompatible with an occupying power’s obligations under international humanitarian law.

The NGOs say compliance would expose local employees to potential retaliation, undermine the principle of humanitarian neutrality and violate European data protection law. — **Agencies**

OMAN



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SHORTTAKES



The package is set to benefit at least 1,000 young men and women.

Youth Centre launches training programme package

MUSCAT: The Youth Centre has announced the launch of a 2026 comprehensive package of training programmes during the holy month of Ramadhan. The programmes, to be held at Muscat Grand Mall, target the age group of 15-34 years. The initiative forms part of efforts to develop young people’s skills and help them make optimum use of their free time.

The package is set to benefit at least 1,000 young men and women through a variety of programmes that combine professional development in different fields, innovation and the promotion of cultural identity and social responsibility.

The initiative seeks to groom a generation that is more capable of meeting the demands of the future. It includes an introduction to the arts of Arabic calligraphy, sports reporting skills covering the basic features of commentary, the promotion of values of teamwork and sportsmanship and the introduction of “3D Concrete Printing” concepts that focus on architectural and structural design related to modern technology. The package also includes a programme dedicated to developing the skills of the blind, notably on the use of artificial intelligence technologies and applications that contribute to facilitating movement, reading texts and dealing with smart devices that promote independence. — ONA

OMANI TEACHER’S DAY

HONOURING ARCHITECTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

THE Sultanate of Oman on Tuesday commemorated Omani Teacher’s Day, observed annually on February 24, in a celebration that reaffirms the teaching profession’s indispensable role in shaping generations and advancing the eternal values of knowledge and learning throughout the nation.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik accords profound and sustained attention to teachers, ensuring comprehensive support for the educational process, continuously developing pedagogical tools and methodologies, and strategically positioning the sector to keep pace with rapid technological transformations, including the thoughtful integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced technologies within the learning environment.

Her Highness The Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, has emphasised the teacher’s exalted and foundational status as the bedrock upon which nations build their renaissance and an essential pillar without which progress and development cannot be sustained.

The annual observance of Omani Teacher’s Day represents both grateful appreciation and formal recognition of the profession’s noble and multifaceted mission, which transcends mere knowledge transmission to encompass the holistic formation of character, the careful cultivation of values, and the



The annual observance of Omani Teacher’s Day represents a formal recognition of the profession’s noble mission. — ONA

systematic development of students’ critical and creative thinking capacities. This comprehensive approach extends to the strategic employment of modern technologies — including smart classrooms, interactive learning applications and virtual reality techniques — in enhancing educational quality and motivating students towards engaged, effective and lifelong

learning. According to official statistics, the number of educators in the Sultanate of Oman has reached 57,741, comprising 13,950 male teachers and 43,791 female teachers, achieving an Omanisation rate of 87.6 per cent. This remarkable figure reflects profound and abiding confidence in national competencies and their vital role. — ONA

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Avoid food wastage during Ramadhan

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, FEB 24

While food waste has reached unprecedented levels worldwide, Ramadhan prohibits over-indulgence and extravagance, and the wastage of food to extreme levels.

In an interview with the Observer, Dr Mohammed bin Said al Maamari, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, stated that the best thing that can be done this Ramadhan is to reduce food wastage by being more mindful of consumption.

“Food wastage is a crime against humanity and ingratitude for the abundant blessings of the Almighty Allah.

We, at the ministry, recommend that people use only what is necessary and avoid extravagance and wasting food needed by many others around the world,” he said.

“There are a number of initiatives in the Sultanate of Oman by societal leaders and authorities to provide food to those in need and avoid waste,” he added.

In the GCC and larger Middle East, food consumption increases during the holy month, with food waste rising up to 50 per cent during Ramadhan compared to other months of



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DR MOHAMMED
BIN SAID
AL MAAMARI

the year. The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) report suggests that Oman generates over 1.7 million tonnes of municipal solid waste annually, with organic waste forming a significant portion of the total. 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. Many volunteer groups have started collecting surplus food and distributing it to the needy daily. Some catering companies have improved buffet systems by using smaller serving trays replenished more frequently, analysing historical consumption data and coordinating redistribution where regulations allow.

SHORT TAKES



Students with physical disabilities reported a higher overall quality of life compared with their peers with visual and hearing impairments.

SQU STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SATISFIED WITH QUALITY OF LIFE

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 24

Students with disabilities at Sultan Qaboos University experience a high quality of life in the campus premises, a research study found. The study offers valuable insights to support the university's ongoing efforts to enhance services and provisions for students with disabilities.

It recommends strengthening appropriate sporting, social and cultural activities tailored to students with disabilities, particularly those with sensory impairments. It also calls for similar exploratory studies in other higher education institutions to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the needs of students with disabilities in university life.

The quantitative study of Dr Khawla bint Hilal al Maamari from the Department of Psychology at the College of Education, SQU, sought to assess the Quality of Life (QOL) of students with disabilities at the university using the World Health Organization's WHOQOL-BREF instrument. Data were collected from 35 students with physical, hearing and visual impairments.

The findings indicate that participants reported high levels of satisfaction across the psychological, social and environmental domains within the university. The physical health domain, however, reflected a moderate level of satisfaction. Psychological well-being scored relatively highly overall. Notably, students with physical disabilities reported a higher overall quality of life compared with their peers with visual and hearing impairments.

Gender-based analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in quality of life between male and female students. However, statistically significant differences were identified according to the type of disability in both the physical and psychological domains, with students with mobility impairments reporting higher scores.

Sultan Qaboos University annually welcomes dozens of students from various disability categories and takes pride in having graduated more than 170 students with disabilities over the past decade. Through its Department of Student Affairs for Students with Disabilities, the university provides comprehensive logistical, technical and psychological support aimed at ensuring their full integration into university life without barriers.

AL DHAHIRAH DISCUSSES TOURISM PROJECTS



IBRI: Al Dhahirah Municipal Council on Tuesday held a meeting during which it discussed ways of developing municipal services, tourism projects and modern housing mechanisms in the wilayats of the governorate. The meeting was held under the auspices of Tahir bin Mabkhout al Junaibi, Governor of Al Dhahirah. The meeting reviewed various service and development issues that include a proposal to beautify the centres of the governorate's wilayats, a proposal to establish a hiking trail in one of the governorate's villages (to enhance its tourism potential) and a study to establish a unified platform for receiving applications to establish more internal road projects within the governorate. — ONA

Kuwait celebrates National Day today

MUSCAT: The State of Kuwait celebrates its National Day today (Wednesday). This year's celebration comes as Kuwait recorded an exceptional developmental milestone during the year 2025, reflecting the wise vision of Shaikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, in building a prosperous state that advances steadily towards the future, based on solid economic strength, humanitarian and diplomatic leadership, and a growing global status.

The relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Kuwait represent a disguised model of cooperation across



various levels, particularly in the economic field. This cooperation ensures mutual benefits for both countries and their peoples.

The bilateral Omani-Kuwaiti relations receive continuous

support from the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Shaikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait.

The publication "State of Kuwait: Deep-Rooted Foundations and Steps Toward the Future," issued by the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf, highlights Kuwait's achievement of unprecedented financial and investment surpluses, supported by the strength of its sovereign wealth funds, along with the banking sector's assets surpassing 100 billion Kuwaiti dinars an indicator of

the resilience of the financial system and the confidence international institutions place in the national economy.

The report also notes that the Kuwait Stock Exchange recorded gains exceeding 9.6 billion Kuwaiti dinars, reinforcing the attractiveness of the investment environment and the rising confidence of regional and international investors.

Kuwait additionally achieved a historic milestone by ranking 19th globally in the National Brand Value Index, with the value of Kuwaiti brands representing about 9 per cent of GDP, one of the highest ratios worldwide. — ONA

‘Transformation, even if small, is what matters’

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, FEB 24

THE Omani Women's Association (OWA) is committed to sustainable empowerment, institutional development and youth leadership to enhance the role of women. In an interview to the Observer, Liqaa bint Saif al Maawali, Chairperson of the OWA in Muscat, said the Association's journey cannot be separated from the broader national framework that has supported Omani women since the early years of the Renaissance. She noted that Oman's leadership has consistently prioritised women's education, employment and civic participation, creating an enabling environment in which women are recognised as equal partners in development.

Over more than five decades, it has evolved from a traditional social platform into a structured institution with measurable community impact. Today, it operates with clear strategic objectives, performance indicators and long-term sustainability plans designed to ensure that its initiatives translate into tangible results.

"This national support has laid



For us, real success is when a woman moves from attending a session to implementing what she has learned — whether by launching a home-based business, enhancing her career prospects or strengthening her family environment

LIQAA BINT SAIF
AL MAAWALI,
OWA OFFICIAL

the foundation for institutions like ours to grow, innovate and serve the community more effectively," she said, adding that the Association views itself as part of a larger national movement aimed at strengthening human capital and social cohesion.

The Association's programmes align closely with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, particularly in the areas of human development, responsible citizenship and innovation.

"For us, real success is when a woman moves from attending a session to implementing what she has learned — whether by launching a home-based business, enhancing her career prospects, or strengthening her family environment," Al Maawali noted.

"Transformation, even if it begins with a small step, is what truly matters." In response to the rapid evolution of the digital landscape, the OWA has expanded its focus on digital awareness and responsible online engagement. One of its recent initiatives, titled "Digital Citizenship in the Age of Social Media," addressed ethical platform usage, online safety and the role of families in preserving values in a fast-changing virtual environment.

Alongside social empowerment, economic empowerment remains a core priority. The Association continues to organise sustainable vocational workshops at its Muscat headquarters, including training in design, tailoring, silver crafting and calligraphy. These workshops are designed not merely as creative outlets but as practical pathways towards entrepreneurship and financial independence.

Young women occupy a particularly significant place in the Association's forward-looking vision. They are viewed not merely as beneficiaries, but as future leaders capable of shaping community development. Through committee participation and initiative design, young members gain hands-on experience in planning, execution and innovation.

Partnerships with governmental and private entities remain central to the Association's sustainability strategy. Al Maawali underscored that collaboration enhances institutional integration and ensures that community-driven initiatives contribute to national development goals. The Association's grassroots reach, she noted, makes such partnerships mutually beneficial and socially impactful.

National Museum strengthens global presence

MOHAMED AL BATTASHI
MUSCAT, FEB 24

The National Museum held a media briefing on Tuesday at Bait Al Gheriza to review its achievements for 2025 and outline key upcoming projects, in the presence of representatives of local media.

Jamal bin Hassan al Mousawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum, highlighted the pivotal role undertaken by the museum as a heritage and cultural landmark reflecting Omani national identity. He noted that during 2025, the museum completed a series of achievements that strengthened its position as an effective bridge for cultural and museum-based communication between the Sultanate of Oman and various local, regional, and international institutions.

He stated that the National Museum received approximately 39 official visits during 2025, including several high-level delegations.

Furthermore, he mentioned



Al Mousawi stated that the National Museum received approximately 39 official visits during 2025, including several high-level delegations.

that the museum, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Russian Federation, organised a celebration marking the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, which included an exhibition of historical photographs and the launch of the Russian "Musical Seasons." During the same year, the "Omani-Japanese Relations Corner" was opened, and the documentary film "Madera" was launched in cooperation with the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Tokyo.

Al Mousawi noted that the museum received several high-level official visits during the year, including General Joseph Aoun, President of the Lebanese Republic, and Emine Erdoğan, Spouse of the President of the Republic of Türkiye, in addition to ministers and senior officials from friendly and partner countries.

On the international front, the museum continued strengthening its cultural diplomacy through the Oman Hall at the Nairobi National Museum (March 2023–March

2028) and the Oman Hall at the State Hermitage Museum (December 2023–January 2025). It also participated in the Islamic Arts Biennale in Saudi Arabia, contributed artefacts to Louvre Abu Dhabi, and organised the exhibition "Splendour of Silver: Treasures from the Omani Court" in Belarus.

Locally, the museum hosted several international exhibitions, including "DIVA! Italian Glamour in Fashion Jewellery," "Masterpieces from the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation," and exhibitions under the Hermitage Corner initiative, alongside other cultural showcases.

The museum was recognised for the second consecutive year as one of the best service outlets in Muscat Governorate under the Institutional Excellence framework. Digital services were enhanced through the launch of an audio guide in Arabic and English, with accessible options for people with disabilities.



WHAT AN OLDER PERSON NEEDS TO KNOW BEFORE FASTING

An older person suffering from chronic illness might not be able to fast as it may be more harmful to their health. One must consult his/her doctor before undertaking fasting



DOCTORS RECOMMEND SEVERAL PRECAUTIONARY STEPS FOR ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS WHO INTEND TO FAST

1. Undergo a medical check-up before Ramadhan.
2. Review and adjust medication schedules with a physician.
3. Consume balanced meals and avoid excessive sweets.
4. Drink adequate fluids between Iftar and Suhoor.
5. Break the fast immediately if symptoms such as dizziness, confusion or signs of hypoglycaemia occur.



BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, FEB 24

THERE is no age limit to fasting. An older healthy adult may continue to fast. However, an older person suffering from chronic illness might not be able to fast as it may be more harmful to their health. One must consult his/her doctor before undertaking fasting. Dr Khamis al Mawali, a family medicine consultant, said that “each elderly individual must be assessed independently before Ramadhan. Those with chronic

illnesses, multiple medications, or unstable medical conditions should consult their doctors well in advance.” He explained that adjusting medication schedules or modifying treatment plans often allows patients to fast safely. “However, fasting without medical guidance can expose vulnerable individuals to serious complications,” he added. Among the most common health concerns for elderly fasting individuals is diabetes. Prolonged fasting hours can lead to dangerous fluctuations in blood sugar levels – from hypoglycaemia during the day to

“
I have fasted for more than 50 Ramadhans. It brings me peace and spiritual comfort. But this year, my doctor advised me to break my fast on certain days because of my blood pressure. I am trying to balance my health with my desire to fast.

HAJJA FATIMA

sudden spikes after Iftar if meals are not balanced. Guidelines issued by the International Diabetes Federation stress the importance of categorising diabetic patients according to risk level before approving fasting. High-risk individuals, particularly those with recurrent hypoglycaemic episodes or poorly controlled diabetes, are often advised not to fast. Similarly, patients with cardiovascular disease or hypertension require careful monitoring. Dehydration – especially in warmer climates

such as Oman – may lower blood pressure abruptly, increasing the risk of dizziness, fainting or falls. Elderly individuals living alone may be particularly vulnerable in such cases. Ageing bodies often experience a diminished sense of thirst, meaning older adults may not realise they are dehydrated until symptoms become severe. Medical guidance warns that dehydration in older adults can escalate quickly, potentially leading to kidney strain or electrolyte imbalances. Doctors therefore advise the elderly who choose to fast to increase fluid intake between Iftar and Suhoor, limit caffeinated beverages, and consume balanced meals rich in protein and fibre rather than sugary foods that may cause energy crashes. Islamic teachings provide clear exemptions for those whose health may be harmed by fasting. Scholars consistently emphasise that Islamic law is rooted in mercy and flexibility. Religious leaders note that some elderly individuals feel emotional discomfort or guilt when advised to break their fast for medical reasons. However, scholars stress that taking advantage of religious concessions when genuinely needed is not a weakness of faith. Rather, it reflects obedience to Islamic principles that prioritise preservation of life and well-being. In cases where fasting is medically unsafe, alternatives such as feeding the needy or engaging in additional acts of worship provide meaningful spiritual fulfilment. For many elderly individuals, Ramadhan represents more than abstaining from food and drink. It is a deeply emotional and social experience. Fasting provides structure, a sense of purpose and a continuation of lifelong traditions. Hajja Fatima, 72, shared her perspective: “I have fasted for more than 50 Ramadhans. It brings me peace and spiritual comfort. But this year, my doctor advised me to break my fast on certain days because of my blood pressure. I am trying to balance my health with my desire to fast.” Such situations often create delicate conversations within families, where children worry about their parents’ health while the elderly express determination to continue long-standing practices. Fasting among the elderly requires a careful balance between spiritual devotion and physical capability. Ramadhan remains a sacred and cherished time, but health must remain paramount. With proper medical guidance, many elderly individuals can fast safely. For others, accepting religious exemptions ensures that Ramadhan continues to be a month of mercy rather than hardship. As communities gather each evening around the Iftar table, the essence of Ramadhan remains clear: compassion – for others, and for oneself.

‘Night to Shine’ fetes special needs people

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 24

THE Diplomatic Club hosted ‘Night to Shine – Muscat’, a special evening dedicated to celebrating people with special needs, bringing together families, caregivers, volunteers, diplomats, corporate partners and community leaders for a memorable event filled with dignity, joy and inclusion.

HH Sayyidah Hujaija bint Jaifer al Said who graced the event in her address, highlighted the value, strength and unique contributions of individuals with special needs, and the joy, love and hope they bring to society.

Organised by Joy House Arabia in partnership with the Tim Tebow Foundation, ‘Night to Shine – Muscat’ formed part of a global initiative that celebrates people with special needs as honoured guests and recognises their individuality and dignity.

Hosted at the Diplomatic Club, the evening featured a red-carpet welcome, music, dancing, interactive activities and a festive dinner. A highlight of the event was the crowning ceremony, where every honoured guest was celebrated as a King or Queen – a defining moment that captured the spirit of the occasion.



‘Night to Shine – Muscat’ formed part of a global initiative that celebrates people with special needs.

The Diplomatic Club extended its hospitality and support to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere, reaffirming its commitment to community engagement and meaningful social impact.

The Muscat edition welcomed more than 150 honoured guests, supported by over 150 volunteers, reflecting the strong sense of community behind the initiative.

The event was supported by several community and corporate

partners, including AmCham Oman, Europcar Oman and Crowe Oman, along with many other organisations and individuals.

The Diplomatic Club, together with Joy House Arabia and its partners, expressed gratitude to the volunteers, families, sponsors and supporters who helped make ‘Night to Shine – Muscat’ a success, reaffirming a shared commitment to building a more inclusive and compassionate society in Oman.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL IN MUSANDAM DISCUSSES PROJECTS, IMPROVING SERVICES



The Municipal Council expressed its keenness to work in coordination with the authorities concerned to achieve sustainable development in the Governorate of Musandam.

KHASAB: The Municipal Council of Musandam Governorate held its second meeting of the year, during which it discussed proposals aimed at improving services and enhancing activities in the field of economy, tourism and housing in the governorate of Musandam.

The meeting discussed a proposal to expand Mahas Industrial City (Madaym) in the Wilayat of Khasab. The project will contribute to supporting investment, promoting economic activity and generating employment opportunities for the people of the governorate. The meeting also discussed a request to expand the residential plan in the Wilayat of Khasab to keep pace with ongoing urban expansion and meet the housing needs of citizens. — ONA



Indian Social Club Oman

NOTICE CALLING THE AGM (2026)

Members are hereby notified that the Annual General Body Meeting of the Indian Social Club, Oman is scheduled on Friday, 27th March 2026, at 6.00 p.m. at the Indian Social Club Hall, Darsait.

The following will be the agenda for the meeting:

1. Reading of notice calling the meeting by the General Secretary.
2. Opening address by the Chairperson.
3. Approval of the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.
4. General Secretary's Report.
5. Discussion and approval of audited accounts for the year ending 2025 and appoint auditors for the year 2026.
6. Any other points raised by the members with the permission of the Chair.

Those members who have renewed their membership and paid their subscription on or before 31st January 2026 are eligible to attend the meeting.

**GENERAL SECRETARY
INDIAN SOCIAL CLUB OMAN**



الروبيان الطبيعي للإستزراع السمكي ش.م.م Natural Shrimp Aquaculture L.L.C

الروبيان الشرقي للإستزراع السمكي ش.م.م Oriental Shrimp Aquaculture L.L.C

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDER

Natural Shrimp Aquaculture LLC and Oriental Shrimp Aquaculture are subsidiaries of Fisheries Development Oman (FDO) inviting you to share offers for the below table.

Tender No.	Description	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Last Date of Submission	Tender Fee
NSA/T/002/2026	Supply of 1HP 2-PADDLE WHEEL AERATORS	26 th February 2026	12 th March 2026	-
NSA/T/003/2026	Supply of Auto Feeder	5 th March 2025	15 th March 2026	-

Please note:

- All proposals should be submitted via email to bidopening_osara@nsa.om. Failure to submit the bid to this email address will automatically disqualify the submission, and no further correspondence will be entertained.
- Any inquiries regarding the RFP should be directed to Osara.tenders@nsa.om. Responses to queries will be provided in writing and shared with all suppliers approached for this RFP.



Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Design, Construction, Financing, Operation and Maintenance (DBFOM) of Veterinary Quarantine under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

As part of the ongoing implementation of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) initiatives, and in line with promoting private sector participation in infrastructure and public service projects.

The Ministry of Finance, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, hereby invites specialized local and international companies to participate in a project for the Design, Construction, Financing, Operation and Maintenance (DBFOM) of Veterinary Quarantine under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

Interested local and international companies may obtain the RFQ documents by sending an email to: ppp.daqc@mof.gov.om

RFQ NO	Deadline for obtaining qualification document	Deadline for clarification	Deadline for submitting qualification documents
MOF – PPP – RFQ – 01/2026	13 March 2026	20 March 2026	28 March 2026



For further information regarding this project, please contact:
Email: ppp.daqc@mof.gov.om
Availability: Sunday to Thursday, from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM (Muscat Time).

WORLD

WIDENING SCANDAL



Reporters wait outside the home of former UK ambassador to the United States, Peter Mandelson, in central London. — AFP

UK GOVT URGED TO RELEASE DOCUMENTS OF EX-PRINCE ANDREW

LONDON: The UK government faced calls to release documents on ex-prince Andrew's past role as a trade envoy, just hours after a veteran politician was quizzed by police in a widening scandal. The Liberal Democrats said they would table a motion in parliament to force the government to release vetting documents on Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor's appointment as trade envoy, a post he held from 2001 to 2011. The former prince was arrested last week on suspicion of misconduct in public office.

"The public is rightly demanding to know how Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor was appointed to represent our nation in a high-level trade role," Liberal leader Ed Davey said. "No one, regardless of their title or their friends, should be beyond the scrutiny of parliament."

The government is set to release in March a first set of documents relating to the appointment of former government minister Peter Mandelson as UK ambassador in Washington. — AFP

Zelensky vows to fight on after 4 years of Russian war

VLADIMIR Putin has not broken Ukraine, its leader Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday, as the Kremlin marked the fourth year of its attack by vowing that it will keep fighting Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II until it achieves its goals. Moscow had hoped to take Kyiv in days when it launched its war on February 24, 2022. Four years later — with hundreds of thousands dead, millions forced to flee, much of eastern Ukraine destroyed and US-led peace talks still deadlocked over territory — it conceded that it has not achieved all it wants in the country. "The goals haven't been fully achieved yet, which is why the military operation continues," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Ukraine, meanwhile, was ready to do "everything" it could to secure peace, Zelensky said in a video address that featured images of Ukrainians carrying out acts of resistance against Russian soldiers in the opening days of the conflict. But any settlement must not "betray" the price paid by Ukrainians throughout the conflict, he said. "Putin has not achieved his goals. He did not break the Ukrainians.

He did not win this war. We have preserved Ukraine, and we will do everything to achieve peace — and to ensure there is justice," Zelensky said. "We want peace. Strong, dignified, and lasting peace," he said, adding that any agreement "must not simply be signed, it must be accepted



A man visits a makeshift memorial for Ukrainian and foreign soldiers, in Kyiv. — AFP

by Ukrainians". "Everything Ukraine has gone through. It must not be surrendered, forgotten, or betrayed," he added.

In a later video address to the European Parliament, Zelensky urged Brussels to set out a clear timeline for his country's accession to the bloc.

Several European leaders including Finnish President Alexander Stubb and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson visited Kyiv on Tuesday to mark the anniversary. European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen was also there, reaffirming that Europe stood "unwaveringly with Ukraine, financially, militarily, and

through this harsh winter." Zelensky was also hosting a videoconference with Kyiv's top allies, including Britain, France and Germany, to push for more support to deter the Russian attack.

The United States has been pushing to end the conflict, mediating talks between the two sides this year in Geneva and Abu Dhabi, but they remain at odds over the issue of territory. Russia, which occupies around 20 per cent of Ukraine, is fighting to gain full control of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region as part of any deal. It has threatened to take it by force if Kyiv does not cave at the negotiating table. — AFP

Spain's conservatives set terms for far-right alliance

MADRID: Spain's main conservative Popular Party (PP) has published conditions for a possible alliance with the far-right Vox party, signalling how the two could cooperate after a general election expected in 2027. While the date of the vote has not been set, polls suggest the PP is on track to win but would fall short of an absolute majority, making Vox a potential kingmaker.

The two parties have been in talks since recent regional elections in Extremadura and Aragon, where the PP led but failed to secure a majority. A PP document seen on Tuesday outlines policy positions any potential partner must adopt, including stricter migration controls and a burqa ban, closely aligning with Vox's platform. The PP also criticised climate policies, saying they "destroy jobs, raise energy costs and push industry out of the country," while calling for "respect for national unity".

Much of Europe's political mainstream avoids parliamentary cooperation with far-right parties. But PP leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo defended his party's approach, saying discussions with Vox are necessary to present "a credible alternative" to the ruling Socialists. — AFP

Trump warns countries that 'play games' with US deals

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump warned countries against backing away from recently negotiated trade deals with the US after the Supreme Court struck down his emergency tariffs, saying that if they did, he would hit them with much higher duties under different trade laws. Trump, in a series of social media posts, said he also may impose license fees on trading partners as uncertainty over his next tariff moves gripped the global economy and sent stocks lower.

"Any Country that wants to 'play games' with the ridiculous supreme court decision, especially those that have 'Ripped Off' the USA for years, and even decades, will be met with a much higher Tariff, and worse, than that which they just recently agreed to. BUYER BEWARE!!!" Trump wrote on Truth Social. Trump said that despite the court's decision to invalidate his tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act,



US President Donald Trump, flanked by Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick speaks during a press briefing at the White House. — Reuters

its decision affirmed his ability to use tariffs under other legal authorities "in a much more powerful and obnoxious way, with legal certainty, than the Tariffs as initially used." He suggested that the US could impose new license fees on trading partners, but did not provide any details.

In Brussels, the European Parliament decided on Monday to postpone a vote on the European Union's trade deal with the US after Trump said he would impose a new temporary import duty of 15 per cent on imports

from all countries. EU goods under the deal would face a 15 per cent US tariff, with exemptions for hundreds of food items, aircraft parts, critical minerals, pharmaceutical ingredients and other goods, while the EU would remove duties on many imports from the US, including industrial goods.

Trump on Friday initially announced the temporary duty under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 at 10 per cent, but promised on Saturday to raise it to 15 per cent, the maximum allowed under the statute. An initial 10 per cent tariff came into effect at a minute past midnight on Tuesday, according to a Customs notice, and it is unclear when the 15 per cent rate would take effect. So far, Trump has only signed an executive order for the 10 per cent tariff.

The path forward for Trump's foreign trade deals remained uncertain, with China urging Washington to scrap tariff measures, the EU freeze on its approval and India delaying planned talks. — Reuters



شركة ظفار للتحلية
Dhofar Desalination Company SAOC

Notice and Agenda of the Annual General Meeting of Dhofar Desalination Company SAOC

The Board of Directors of Dhofar Desalination Company SAOC (the “**Company**”) has the pleasure to invite the shareholders of the company to the Annual General Meeting (“**AGM**”) to be held at 3:00 pm. on Monday, 9th March 2026 on the e-portal for convening general meetings which you may access through the Muscat Clearing and Depository SAOC (“**MCD**”) website (www.mcd.om).

Failing quorum, the AGM shall be reconvened at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, 11th March 2026 on the e-portal for convening general meetings which you may access through the MCD website (www.mcd.om) to discuss and consider the following agenda:

Firstly: Agenda for the Extraordinary General Meeting

1. To amend article (16) of the Company’s Articles of Association (**Annexure 1**).

Secondly: Agenda for the Annual General Meeting

1. To consider and approve the Board of Directors’ Report for the financial year ended December 31, 2025;

2. To consider and approve the Auditor’s report and the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account of the Company for the financial year ended 31 December 2025;

3. To notify the General Assembly with transactions carried out with related parties during the financial year ended 31 December 2025 (**Annexure 1**).

4. To consider and approve the proposed related party transactions to be entered into by the Company during the financial year ending on 31 December 2026 (**Annexure 2**).

5. To appoint the statutory auditors for the financial year ending December 31, 2025, and approve their fees.

6. To elect the new Board members from amongst shareholders or non-shareholders. Any person who wishes to nominate himself/herself to the Board of Directors should complete a nomination form available with the Company. The nomination form can be obtained from the Company’s head office. The completed forms should be delivered to the Company minimum five (5) days prior to the AGM date. Nomination forms received after 5pm on Thursday, 26th of February 2026 shall not be accepted.

According to the Commercial Companies Law RD 18/2019 and the Rules for Convening General Meetings via Electronic means issued by MOCIIP, we would like to call your attention to the following:

(a) Only a corporate person may authorize a natural person to attend and vote on its behalf on decisions/resolutions of the general meeting, through electronic means, provided such natural person must have an investor number at MCD.

(b) Voting on any item of the agenda shall commence prior to the convention of the general meeting at a maximum of three (3) days and ends on the date of the meeting. If a shareholder’s balance is changed either by increase or decrease the voting process shall stand cancelled and must revote on the date of the meeting.

Please log on to the e-portal at least 30 minutes prior to the AGM.

For further information, please contact **Mr. Taha Al Lawati**, on mobile no. **+968 93677667**.

Chairman
JOHN CLARK

Legal Advisor
AL BUSAIDY MANSOOR JAMAL & CO.
BARRISTERS & LEGAL CONSULTANTS

SHORT TAKES



Thai military personnel walk near the forested disputed border with Cambodia. — Reuters

THAILAND, CAMBODIA
DISPUTE EXCHANGE
OF FIRE AT BORDER

BANGKOK: Thailand’s military said its troops exchanged fire with Cambodian forces along their border on Tuesday, accusing its neighbour of violating a December truce, while Phnom Penh denied the use of “any weapons”. The Southeast Asian nations’ decades-long border dispute erupted into several rounds of clashes last year, killing dozens of people and displacing more than a million in July and December.

Thailand’s military said Cambodian forces “fired a single 40 mm grenade round” near a Thai patrol in the border province of Sisaket on Tuesday, prompting return fire, according to a statement. Thai army spokesman Winthai Suvaree accused Cambodia of violating their ceasefire deal, which ended three weeks of clashes.

Cambodia’s Information Minister Neth Pheaktra said the allegation were “entirely false” and designed to “mislead public opinion and provoke tension”. “Following the incident, Thai forces responded by firing an M79 (grenade launcher) in the direction from which the shot originated... as a warning and for self-defence,” it added. The Thai army, citing a preliminary assessment, said the “incident may have resulted from a rotation of Cambodian troops, with new personnel lacking familiarity with regulations and command control”. — AFP

UN ARRIVES IN DR
CONGO TO PREPARE
CEASEFIRE MISSION

KINSHASA: A team of UN peacekeepers arrived in the flashpoint eastern Democratic Republic of Congo town of Uvira to prepare the deployment of a ceasefire?monitoring mission, the force said on Tuesday. Eastern DRC has been ravaged by three decades of conflict and faces renewed violence following the 2021 resurgence of the M23 armed group, backed by Rwanda and its army.

The M23 seized large swathes of territory in the east and launched an offensive in December on Uvira, a strategic town in South Kivu province near the border with Burundi. The assault drew condemnation from the United States, which has mediated a fragile peace deal between the DRC and Rwanda. That agreement provided for the UN’s DRC peacekeeping mission MONUSCO to carry out a field-monitoring operation with a view to implementing a permanent ceasefire.

On Tuesday, MONUSCO and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, a grouping of surrounding countries, said in a statement they had deployed a joint exploratory and preliminary assessment mission to Uvira. Scheduled to run until Friday, the mission focuses on assessing access, security, logistics and engagement needs, MONUSCO said. The statement called the mission “an essential step towards deploying the future joint ceasefire?monitoring mechanism”. In January, the M23 withdrew its last troops from Uvira, claiming it was responding to a US request. The Congolese army said it had retaken control of the town. — AFP

MALAYSIA
CURBS NON-AI
DATA CENTRES
AS POWER
SQUEEZE
LOOMS

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has frozen the development of new data centres not used for artificial intelligence over power and water concerns, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on Tuesday, as the country pivots to resource-hungry AI facilities. The Southeast Asian nation is emerging as a major regional IT infrastructure hub, but it faces growing challenges, including a sharp rise in electricity and water supply demands — both needed to keep the data centres

running.

“For the past one and a half years, almost two years ago, we have limited the entry of new data centres that are not related to AI,” Anwar told Malaysia’s parliament during a question session. “So all new applications that were not related... have already been stopped,” he said.

Data centres that offered high-technology benefits related to AI will still be approved, he added. Anwar, who is also Malaysia’s finance

minister, stressed the country still had sufficient capacity to meet current energy supply needs, though he noted it would have to look further afield in the future.

This includes tapping electricity supply from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Power Grid.

Future power supply could also come from Malaysia’s Sarawak state, situated on Borneo island, which boasts an abundant supply of hydro and solar energy. — AFP

Lebanon fears Israel attack
infrastructure in escalation

LEBANON’S foreign minister said on Tuesday his country feared its infrastructure could be hit by Israeli strikes if the situation with Iran escalates. The comments from Youssef Raggi came amid a massive US military buildup in the Middle East that suggested Washington was prepared to wage a potentially sustained campaign against Iran.

“There are signs that the Israelis could strike very hard in the event of an escalation, potentially including strategic infrastructure such as the airport,” Raggi told reporters in Geneva. “We are currently conducting diplomatic efforts to request that, even in the event of retaliation, Lebanese civilian infrastructure not be targeted,” he said. His stressed that his country’s leadership had been very clear: “This war does not concern us.”

On Monday, Washington ordered non-emergency personnel to leave its embassy in Beirut as anticipation rose of a possible conflict. Lebanon fears it could feel the repercussions of war in Iran, especially if Israel and Lebanese group Hezbollah are involved in the conflict. Israel last Friday carried out deadly strikes on Hezbollah command centres in eastern Lebanon and targets linked to the Palestinian group Hamas in the south.

Hezbollah said on Saturday that eight of its fighters had been killed, and vowed renewed “resistance”.

Lebanon’s government last year committed to disarming Hezbollah, which was badly weakened in a recent war with Israel, and tasked

There are signs that the Israelis could strike very hard in the event of an escalation, potentially including strategic infrastructure such as the airport. We are currently conducting diplomatic efforts to request that, even in the event of retaliation, Lebanese civilian infrastructure not be targeted

Youssef Raggi



An excavator clears rubble before a heavily-damaged building in the centre of Lebanon’s eastern Bekaa Valley region. — AFP

the army with drawing up a plan to do so. Over the last few months, the military has, through its limited capabilities, worked to dismantle Hezbollah facilities and tunnels and confiscate weapons.

It declared in January the completion of the first phase of its plan, which tackled the area south of the Litani river, located around 30 kilometres north of Israel. Israel, which accuses Hezbollah of re-arming, has criticised the army’s progress as insufficient, and has kept up regular strikes on Lebanon despite a November 2024 ceasefire that sought to end more than a year of hostilities with the group.

Meanwhile, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, the ideological arm of the military, are carrying out drills on the country’s southern shores of the Gulf, state media said on Tuesday.

“Combined 1404 (2026) exercise of the IRGC Ground Forces has begun,” state TV reported, referring to this year in both the Iranian and Gregorian calendars. The war games are focused on the south coasts but similar drills are happening in other parts of Iran, the report added.

They include drones, vessels, amphibious vehicles, ground-to-sea missiles and rockets as well as artillery, state TV said.

“Very good measures have been designed in various sectors, including missiles, artillery, drones, special forces, armoured vehicles and armoured personnel carriers,” Mohammad Karami, commander of IRGC ground forces, told state television. He said the drills were being conducted “based on the threats that exist”, without elaborating. — AFP

BALI FLOODING PROMPTS TOURIST EVACUATION

BADUNG: Flooding in parts of Indonesia’s popular resort island of Bali prompted hundreds of people, including dozens of tourists, to seek safety, a local disaster official said. Intense rains triggered flooding since late on Monday across several Bali districts and the provincial capital city of Denpasar, said local disaster mitigation agency senior official I Gede Agung Teja Bhusana Yadnya.

In total, about 350 people temporarily sought safety amid rising waters on Tuesday, Gede said, adding that most of the people returned to their homes as waters receded. Torrential rains also forced two international flights to Bali’s airport to be diverted earlier on Tuesday, while three other departures from the airport were delayed, an airport spokesman said in a statement. In September, a flash flood that struck parts of Bali killed at least 18 people and left four missing in what the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) said was the island’s worst flood in a decade. — AFP

PROTECTION FROM THREAT

PM Albanese evacuated after security incident



Australian PM Anthony Albanese was forced to evacuate his official residence over a security threat. Police said they had responded to “an alleged security incident” around 6 pm. “A thorough search of a protection establishment was undertaken and nothing suspicious was located,” they said, adding there was “no current threat to the community or public safety”. The prime minister’s office said that they trust the police “and thank them for their work”. — AFP

FLIGHT ACCIDENT

Seven killed in India medical plane crash



Seven people were killed when a chartered air ambulance crashed in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand, officials said. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said the Beechcraft C90 operating a “medical evacuation (Air Ambulance) flight” crashed in the Kasaria area of the eastern state of Jharkhand. Rescue and medical teams rushed to the site of the crash, which local media said was deep inside a difficult-to-access forest. — AFP

AGRICULTURE DEMANDS

Serbian farmers block roads nationwide



Thousands of Serbian farmers blocked roads across the country with their tractors to demand higher subsidies and protection from cheap imported products such as milk and pork as well as faster payments for their products. The protests started in Serbia’s southwest two weeks ago and have spread across the country, with 42 sites on Tuesday. In Bogatic, tractors, decorated with national flags, clogged up the main intersection. — Reuters

OPINION

Ramadhan: Returning to what truly nourishes



HYESHA BARRETT

The writer is a Master Life Coach and NLP Practitioner

THERE is a certain hush that arrives with Ramadhan, a subtle softening in the air that feels less like a religious observance and more like a collective exhale. The pace of life shifts, the noise lowers, and even those who are not fasting often sense the change. Something becomes quieter, more intentional, more aware. It is as though the world gently slows its steps and invites the heart to catch up. Ramadhan is often explained through the idea of abstinence, of not eating or drinking from dawn to dusk, yet that description barely touches its essence. The outer discipline is simply the doorway. The deeper invitation is inward. It asks people to pause, to notice, and to remember what truly sustains them. In a world that constantly encourages consumption, more food, more work, more noise, more distraction, this month offers a rare counterbalance. It softly suggests that perhaps less can reveal more. When the usual comforts are set aside, something honest begins to surface. Hunger becomes a teacher rather than a punishment, and thirst becomes a quiet reminder of gratitude. Without the constant reflex to reach for something, whether a snack, a screen, or a task, there is space to sit with oneself. Many discover that it is not the

body that struggles most, but the habits of the mind and the automatic ways we try to fill every empty moment. In that space, reflection naturally rises. Homes often feel different during this time. Meals are shared with greater intention, conversations stretch longer into the evening, and families gather with a sense of togetherness that everyday life sometimes scatters. The simple act of breaking the fast at sunset can feel deeply meaningful, not because of what is eaten, but because of the awareness brought to it. Gratitude quietly replaces rush, and presence replaces distraction. For parents, this slowing down offers something particularly precious. Children watch the rhythm of the household change and absorb its tone long before they understand its meaning. They notice patience, shared meals, gentle rituals, and the way adults choose presence over haste. In these small daily moments, values are not taught through lectures but through lived example. Faith, empathy, and self-restraint are quietly modelled, becoming part of a child's inner landscape in ways that last far beyond the month itself. There is also a widening of compassion. Experiencing hunger, even temporarily,

It is a reminder that when life slows down and the noise softens, the heart remembers how to listen again, and how to live with greater intention, compassion and quiet grace.

softens the heart toward those who live with it daily. Generosity becomes more instinctive. Giving feels less like an obligation and more like an expression of shared humanity. Small acts of kindness ripple outward, reminding communities that care and connection are what truly hold people together. What makes Ramadhan powerful is not perfection. No one moves through it flawlessly. There are moments of fatigue, impatience, and old habits calling loudly. Yet even these moments become part of the learning. The month gently reveals where we are reactive, where we are tender, and where we might grow. It becomes a quiet reset, a clearing of emotional and spiritual clutter, and an opportunity to realign with what matters most. Long after the month ends, something often lingers. A little more gratitude, a little more restraint, a deeper appreciation for simplicity. The practices may fade, yet the memory of that inner stillness remains like a compass pointing back home. In this way, Ramadhan is less about giving things up and more about returning to oneself. It is a reminder that when life slows down and the noise softens, the heart remembers how to listen again, and how to live with greater intention, compassion and quiet grace.

TRUMP’S CHANCE TO SELL VOTERS ON IRAN PLANS IN HOUSE

PATRICIA ZENGERLE

Tuesday’s State of the Union address provides President Donald Trump with a nationally televised opportunity to persuade sceptical American voters to rally behind his threatened strikes against Iran over its nuclear programme. Advisers have urged Trump to focus on the economy, immigration and other domestic policy issues when he takes the US House of Representatives podium for the speech on Wednesday. That has not been his focus to date. Instead, the run-up to the event has been overshadowed by a huge buildup of US military forces in the Middle East and preparations for a conflict with Iran that could last for weeks if Tehran does not reach a deal to solve a longstanding dispute over its nuclear programme. On Monday, Trump dismissed talk that some members of his administration have doubts about going to war with Iran. “I am the one who makes the decision, I would rather have a Deal than not but, if we don’t make a Deal, it will be a very bad day for that Country and, very sadly, its people,” Trump said in a social media post. Trump’s fellow Republicans also took control of both the House of Representatives and Senate as his “Make America Great Again” message resonated with many Americans, but opinion polls show the party will struggle to keep control of Congress. The risks from an Iran conflict are not merely political. Trump and his aides have touted his successful capture last month of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, but Iran, a nation of 93 million people with a large supply of missiles, is a more formidable foe. Trump asserted in July that US strikes on Iran the previous month had been so successful that they “obliterated” the country’s nuclear facilities, saying, “It would take years to bring them back into service.” However, as US ships and other military equipment amassed near Iran, Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff, who leads nuclear negotiations on the US side, said on Sunday on Fox News that Iran was “probably a week away from having industrial-grade bomb-making material.” Trump’s audience on Tuesday includes Democrats in Congress who criticised him for scrapping a 2015 agreement that limited Iran’s nuclear programme in return for sanctions relief only to later threaten military action while seeking a new pact. — Reuters

Building a nation within the four walls day by day

TEACHER’S Day in the Sultanate of Oman, observed annually on February 24, offers a profound opportunity to reflect on the enduring and transformative role of educators in national development. More than a ceremonial observance, it is a recognition of the silent yet powerful nation-building process that takes place daily within classrooms across the country. A teaching journey spanning several years in colleges across Oman, particularly in instructing Omani police officers and various paramedical staff, reveals the depth of this responsibility. These learners are not merely students pursuing qualifications, they are future protectors of national security and guardians of public health. They uphold justice, maintain civil order, and protect the sovereignty of the state, while paramedical professionals serve at the frontlines of healthcare delivery. Educating such individuals means contributing directly to the structural integrity of society. In this sense, teachers are not simply disseminating information, they are building a nation within the four walls of the classroom. One of the most rewarding aspects of this long academic service has been the positive respect consistently shown by students. Omani learners, particularly those in uniformed and healthcare services, often demonstrate discipline, gratitude, and a deep appreciation for their instructors. Their gestures of acknowledgement, whether through words of gratitude, professional excellence after graduation, or continued contact, reflect a cultural ethos that values guidance and mentorship. Equally significant is



Educating individuals enhances structural integrity of society.



DR SAJI UTHUPPAN

The writer is an English lecturer

Teacher’s Day is a recognition that every lesson delivered, every discussion facilitated, and every student empowered contributes to the broader vision of national advancement

the respect extended by various academic and administrative departments, which recognise the dedication and professionalism required to sustain high standards of instruction over decades. Historically, teachers in Oman were revered as moral authorities and custodians of knowledge within their communities. While earlier educational settings relied largely on lecture-based and teacher-centred approaches, the contemporary classroom has undergone a significant pedagogical transformation. Today, education is fundamentally student-centred rather than lecture-driven. Modern teaching methodologies prioritise interactive learning, critical inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, and experiential engagement. Instead of passive reception, students are encouraged to analyse, question and apply knowledge within real-world contexts. This shift is particularly crucial in the education of police officers and paramedical staff. Training

future officers now involves case-based discussions, scenario analysis, ethical debates, and applied communication exercises. Likewise, paramedical education integrates simulations, practical demonstrations, and reflective practice. The teacher’s role has evolved from sole knowledge transmitter to facilitator, mentor, and guide, empowering learners to take ownership of their intellectual and professional growth. Such an approach strengthens competence, confidence and accountability. National leadership in Oman has consistently emphasised the value of educators in shaping society. Her Highness The Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, has expressed sincere appreciation for teachers, commending their sustained efforts in nurturing talents and instilling noble values that enable students to contribute meaningfully to society. This acknowledgement from the highest levels of leadership reinforces the understanding that teachers are central to Oman’s sustainable development. Whether in earlier times or in the present day, the essence of teaching remains unchanged to inspire, to guide, and to cultivate responsible citizens. In a nutshell, on Teacher’s Day, therefore, reflection extends beyond celebration. I would say that it is a recognition that every lesson delivered, every discussion facilitated, and every student empowered contributes to the broader vision of national advancement. Therefore, indeed, within those classroom walls, futures are shaped, institutions are strengthened, and the foundations of sustainable development are quietly, steadfastly built.

Festivals or not, let’s work together to reduce food waste



SAMUEL KUTTY

The writer is a freelance journalist and author who worked in Oman and India

FESTIVE food symbolises happiness, as loved ones come together to share a meal. However, despite these gatherings being central to celebrations, a large amount of food is discarded and ultimately ends up in landfills.

Reports indicate that festivals generate substantial food waste, with up to 50 per cent of prepared food at events going uneaten. This waste, driven by over-preparation, the social display of abundance, and improper storage, imposes significant environmental and economic costs.

Although many of us may not consider it important, this occurs at a time when more than 783 million people go to sleep on empty stomachs every night — figures that reveal the harsh reality of our contemporary society.

“In a world where one in eleven people goes hungry while tonnes of food are lost or wasted every day, it is time to end this troubling paradox. Reducing food loss and waste is critical, especially given the growing global population,” laments a United Nations report.

The Food Waste Index report by the UN Environment Programme indicates that approximately 13.2 per cent of food produced globally is lost between harvest and retail. Additionally, an estimated 19 per cent of total global food production is wasted collectively

in households, food service, and retail sectors.

“This number is even more striking, given the large number of hungry people in the world. Wasted food is not only inefficient, it’s a social justice issue,” points out the UN report.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation reports that average food waste in the Middle East and North Africa region amounts to approximately 250 kilograms per person, which is equivalent to more than \$60 billion annually.

It highlights that food waste is not merely an issue of inefficiency; it also represents a social justice concern, as all discarded food could be redirected to support the food recovery hierarchy and prevent perfectly edible food from being wasted.

It is ironic that although festivals promote compassion and empathy, they often result in food waste that could have benefited those in need. We frequently overlook how much food we purchase, prepare, and consume during this time.

“Between 15 and 20 per cent of all food purchased by consumers becomes rot and find its way to the garbage bin before even being used or eaten. This percentage increases to around 30 per cent during festivals,” points out a report by EcoMENA, a sustainability advocate in the Middle East.

Reports indicate that up to 50 per cent of

It is ironic that although festivals promote compassion and empathy, they often result in food waste that could have benefited those in need

prepared food is often discarded in some regions, driven by excessive purchasing and lavish, buffet-style parties.

Therefore, it is essential that during celebrations, we reflect on food waste and its impact on the community and the economy. Moreover, it is both environmentally and morally concerning that our society has become so apathetic towards the essential resources of life.

It has been reported that the average Omani household discards one-third of the food it purchases. Consumption influenced by social pressures and persuasive marketing leads to more items and products being brought into the home than family members can realistically use.

Recently, due to economic crises, many nations have started addressing the issue of food waste by channelling surplus food through donations to food banks and other charity organisations while maintaining its safety before distributing it to families in need.

For restaurants and suppliers, festivals present an opportunity to take the initiative in addressing food waste. They can significantly impact waste reduction and sustainability by implementing proactive strategies such as menu optimisation, responsible sourcing, creative food repurposing, charitable initiatives, and staff education.

EUROPE FACES LARGE ‘SHORTFALLS’ IN ITS DEFENCE

MARIE HEUCLIN

Europe has wide “shortfalls” in its military capabilities which leave it “ill-prepared” as the war in Ukraine grinds on, a new report said on Tuesday. With the new security strategy of US President Donald Trump’s administration forcing European countries to rethink defence policies, four years of war in Ukraine has spurred efforts to boost military capabilities, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) said in its annual report.

The 2026 edition of the Military Balance report by the London-based institute notes that the United States is seeking to refocus its efforts on protecting its own territory.

As a result, the US leader continues to push allies for “greater burden-sharing” in military spending, both in Europe and in the Asia-Pacific region in response to China’s growing influence.

In 2025, global military spending rose by 2.5 per cent to \$2.63 trillion, a slower pace than over the past five years. This was partly due to a drop in the US defence budget - a decline unlikely to last, with the Trump administration’s defence spending expected to exceed \$1 trillion in 2026 for the first time.

Part of that will notably fund America’s “Golden Dome” missile defence shield project, the IISS said. In contrast, military spending continued to grow at “record levels” in Europe, reaching \$562.9 billion - up 12.6 per cent in a year - driven by Germany.

Nato countries, under pressure from America and facing an increased threat from Russia, have pledged to raise national defence budgets to 5 per cent of GDP by 2035. But they could be constrained by their “limited fiscal headroom”, the IISS warned.

The IISS report, published on the fourth anniversary of Russia’s war in Ukraine, said it was difficult to imagine the war would end any time soon.

“Western estimates of Russian personnel losses vary, but these may now total more than a million killed or wounded,” the report added.

Despite that, “Russia has been able to adapt, regenerate and maintain its capability”.

Russia’s war in Ukraine has driven “rapid and continuous evolution in technologies - notably in the design and use of uninhabited systems and artificial intelligence - as well as in tactics and defence-production cycles,” according to the IISS.

But any end to the conflict will depend on “decisions taken in foreign capitals” which will “play an important role in shaping the war’s trajectory”.

This is especially “given both sides’ reliance on external support for materiel.”

The IISS report highlighted Nato efforts to reinforce its eastern flank against a potential threat, pointing to drone incursions into Poland last September. — AFP

Tradition and togetherness for Ramadhan in Oman



OMAN AL YAHYAI

The writer is a multilingual writer and media professional based in Paris. She specialises in human rights and immigration



Food, of course, plays a central role, not because Ramadhan is about eating, but because Iftar brings people together.

In the Sultanate of Oman, Ramadhan is not just a month in the calendar. It is a feeling. It is anticipation, calm, hunger and generosity all woven together. Long before the crescent moon is officially sighted, there is already a quiet excitement in the air. Ramadhan is important because it is a holy month, but also because life changes. It slows down in a way that feels intentional and meaningful.

One of the first things people notice is the shift in routine. Work and school hours are reduced, giving everyone more time to rest, reflect and prepare for the evening. Offices close earlier. Class schedules are shortened. The pace of the day softens. Unlike the rush of ordinary months, Ramadhan in Oman and Muslim countries in general, allows space, space to pray more, to read the Holy Quran, to sit quietly and to think. The adjustment acknowledges that fasting from sunrise to sunset is physically demanding and it gives people the opportunity of balancing productivity with spirituality.

That slower rhythm makes a difference. Ramadhan becomes a time where Omanis consciously focus on spiritual growth. Mosques fill for Taraweeh prayers at night. People make extra du’a. Families gather after prayer and talk longer than they usually would. The month feels sacred, but also intimate.

Food, of course, plays a central role, not because Ramadhan is about eating, but because Iftar brings people together. There is something special about preparing a meal all day while fasting. Hunger builds anticipation, but it also builds appreciation. In many Omani homes, cooking becomes a shared activity. It is a time to try new recipes, to experiment with desserts and to pass down family traditions.

Certain foods are reserved almost exclusively for Ramadhan. Samboosas are fried until perfectly golden and crisp. Lokma appears on nearly every table and umm ali, warm and sweet, becomes a comforting dessert after a long day. And then there is Vimto, that purple drink that seems to define

Ramadhan becomes a time where Omanis consciously focus on spiritual growth. Mosques fill for Taraweeh prayers at night. People make extra du’a. Families gather after prayer and talk longer than they usually would

Ramadhan evenings across the Gulf. For many, just thinking about these foods during the day while fasting becomes motivation. It is something to look forward to, a reminder that patience will be rewarded.

When the athan for Maghrib echoes through neighbourhoods, the day shifts instantly. Families gather around dates and water, breaking their fast together. There is a moment of silence and of gratitude. Then comes the meal, often hearty, colourful and shared generously.

On weekends, Ramadhan becomes even more social. Families rotate invitations for Iftar. One night might be spent at an aunt’s house, another at a cousin’s. Friends organise gatherings. The atmosphere is lively, filled with laughter and the sound of plates being passed around. Ramadhan in Oman is not isolating, it is deeply communal. It strengthens relationships. It reminds people that faith and family are intertwined.

One of the most joyful traditions for children is Qaranqasho. Often described as Oman’s version of Halloween, Qaranqasho takes place at night during Ramadhan, usually in the middle of the month. Children dress in beautiful traditional clothes, carry small bags and go door to door in their neighbourhoods collecting sweets and snacks. Neighbours prepare for it in advance, filling bowls with candy and greeting children warmly. The streets fill with

excitement, laughter and bright outfits. It is a night that children look forward to every year, a memory that stays with them long after they grow up.

As the month draws to a close, another kind of excitement begins to build: Eid preparation. The last ten nights of Ramadhan are spiritually intense, but they are also filled with preparation. Men and women begin tailoring their traditional clothes. Dishdashas are fitted and dresses are chosen carefully. Girls and women visit salons for henna, decorating their hands with intricate designs. Shopping malls become busier as families buy new shoes, accessories and gifts.

The final days of Ramadhan in Oman carry a mix of emotions, sadness that the holy month is ending and happiness that Eid is approaching. The streets feel different. There is a sense of completion, of accomplishment. Fasting for 30 days is not easy, but doing it in a society that moves together makes it meaningful.

Perhaps that is what makes Ramadhan in Oman so powerful. It is not something you do alone while the world continues unchanged. The country acknowledges it, the routine adjusts and the community participates. The environment supports the spiritual journey. Ramadhan in Oman is a reminder that faith is not only personal; it can be collective. It is a month where time feels softer, food tastes sweeter and family feels closer.

SPORTS

GOING ALL OUT



FORMER COACH MACCI SAYS SERENA CERTAIN TO MAKE COMEBACK

NEW YORK: Serena Williams' former coach Rick Macci believes the 23-time Grand Slam champion is certain to return to competitive tennis and said the 44-year-old is "going all out" in training to get herself ready for a return to the sport.

Williams, who won her last Grand Slam singles title in 2017 and has not competed since the 2022 US Open, can officially enter tournaments after rejoining the tennis anti-doping testing pool last year.

The American has denied that she is preparing to return to the sport she dominated for two decades, but raised eyebrows last month by deflecting questions about a comeback during an appearance on NBC's Today Show.

Macci, who previously coached Williams and her sister Venus in the early 1990s, told French publication L'Equipe that he believed she is preparing for a comeback.

"She's training with lots of sparring partners - guys," he said. "She's also played with Alycia Parks, a good friend of hers in South Florida. So I have no doubt about it (her comeback). I always thought she would come back from time to time to make appearances with Venus in doubles.

"But we're not just talking about doubles here ... she's going all out. If she didn't think she could compete with the best and win matches, she wouldn't do it. It's 100% certain she'll dive back into competition."

Macci, 71, had no doubts about Williams' ability to handle the rigours of the tour.

"The question is whether that competitive spirit is still there," he added. "She's answering that question herself: she's coming back because she is a competitor at heart."

Williams said in August 2022 that she was "evolving away from tennis" and her team has not responded to Reuters requests for comment on her potential comeback.

Macci suggested that Williams could use Indian Wells or the Miami Open to launch her comeback next month.

"It'll be interesting to see how fit she is," he added.

"Making an appearance, playing an exhibition match or a match is one thing. Doing it again the next day and the day after that, and performing well day after day is another." — Reuters

Dominant Seeb clinch 8th straight volleyball Shield



Seeb players celebrate after winning the Ministry Shield.

Pictures by Abdulwahid al Hamadani

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
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SEEB CLUB reaffirmed their dominance over Omani volleyball, clinching the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth Shield 2025–26 title after defeating Al Bashayer in straight sets in a high intensity final at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher. The triumph marks Al Seeb's eighth consecutive Shield title in the 15th edition of the competition, underlining an era of sustained excellence.

Said bin Abdullah al Balushi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development, was the chief guest as the final unfolded before an energised crowd that witnessed a contest rich in momentum shifts and tactical battles.

Al Bashayer opened the first set with confidence, racing to a 3–0 lead through smart finishing by Yousuf al Abri and the powerful presence of Iranian professional Daniel. Yet Seeb responded swiftly, levelling at 3–3 before Saud al Maamari's decisive serves shifted momentum. The set evolved into a nerve-tight duel, tied at 17–17 and later 22–22. Experience proved decisive as Mohammed al Maqbali capitalised on defensive hesitation to seal the set 25–23.

The second set reflected Seeb's champion mentality. Although Al Bashayer briefly regained composure through disciplined blocking and transition play, the introduction of Younis



Seeb and Al Bashayer players in action during the Ministry Shield final.

al Amri added attacking depth for Seeb, Khamis al Jabri's sharp finishing and improved reception stability widened the gap to 14–10, and Seeb maintained control to close at 25–19.

The third set delivered renewed drama. Al Bashayer surged early, benefiting from minor lapses in concentration and the score reached a tense 18–18. However, composure under pressure once again separated the sides. Seeb's defensive organisation and calculated serving disrupted Al Bashayer's rhythm, allowing the champions to pull away and conclude the set 25–21, sealing a comprehensive 3–0 victory.

Khamis al Jabri stood out with 16 points, spearheading a cohesive team display marked by defensive discipline and tactical clarity.

MAJEES FINISH THIRD

In the third-place playoff, Majees secured a 3–1 win over Sohar (25–15, 25–21, 23–25, 25–20), demonstrating superior serving strength and structured defence to claim the bronze medal.

During the awards ceremony, officiated by Said al Balushi and Oman Volleyball Association Chairman Ibrahim al Maqbali, Majees received bronze medals, Al Bashayer silver and Seeb lifted the Shield amid jubilant celebrations.

Seeb head coach Jamal al Maamari described the triumph as "the result of long-term planning and institutional stability," emphasising that the club's 16 titles (all competitions) in eight seasons reflect a sustained sporting project rather than isolated success.

"We have built a culture of winning and accountability. The players understand how to manage decisive moments," he said.

Al Bashayer coach Sulaiman al Toobi acknowledged the fine margins, noting: "We prepared tactically and started strongly, but final was decided by details. Seeb's experience in crucial phases made the difference."

Captain Yousuf al Shukaili highlighted mental resilience as the key factor: "Every team aims to defeat the champion. Our responsibility is to remain composed when the pressure rises."

With another Shield secured, Seeb's dominance continues not merely as a statistic, but as a testament to a sustained culture of excellence shaping Omani volleyball's modern era.

Former US Open champion Raducanu in no hurry to find new coach

LONDON: Emma Raducanu insists she is in no rush to find a new coach as the former US Open champion looks to revert to a "more aggressive style of play".

The British tennis player has got through several coaches in a relatively short career, with Francisco Roig the latest to leave the role after the Spaniard spent six months working with Raducanu.

The 23-year-old was outspoken after a second-round loss to Anastasia Potapova at the Australian Open, saying she wanted to be playing "in a way more similar to when I was younger".

In Raducanu's next tournament in Romania she reached her first final since the stunning US Open triumph in 2021 and she insisted she remains happy working with hitting partner Alexis Canter, a 27-year-old former British player who reached a career-high ranking of 779 last year.

"Right now I wouldn't say I'm actively looking for a coach," Raducanu told the Guardian. "I have Alexis in my corner. He knows me as a person. He knows



me as a player and I've actually had some success with him in the past year. So it's going well.

"I know the drills that I need to be doing... just repetition of doing those key fundamentals. I think I want to go back to that and a more aggressive style of playing."

Raducanu's run to the final in Cluj-Napoca — where she won just two games against Sorana Cirstea — came at the cost of contracting a virus she struggled to shake off while losing in the first round of two tournaments in the Middle East.

"I had really long effects for the last three weeks," she said. "I've been trying to clear them. So the Middle East trip was very difficult for me.

"I'm getting ready for Indian Wells and just trying to get back to full health. And I still have a bit of time, so I'm just looking forward to doing my best to be ready for that."

Despite her recent setbacks, Raducanu remains 25th in the world rankings heading into the WTA tournament in Indian Wells, California, starting on March 4.

— AFP

RAMADAN TOURNEY



Oman Post claimed a 3–1 win against Madayn.

GOALS RAIN IN SUR
AS GHAZI TOURNEY
OFF TO GREAT START

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
@riyadhbhalush

THE 23rd edition of the Ghazi Ramadan Tournament 2026 kicked off on Sunday evening with a remarkable note, as large crowds filled the indoor sports hall at the Sur Sports Complex, underlining the tournament’s prominent status as one of the governorate’s leading Ramadan sporting events.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Amer bin Nasser al Matani, CEO of the Development Foundation of Oman LNG, in the presence of officials, representatives of public and private entities, and supporting partners.

The ceremony featured community oriented performances, including an impressive football skills display by a young talent from Sur, followed by an exhibition match for children that drew enthusiastic applause. In a symbolic gesture of encouragement, the patron stepped onto the court to greet and motivate the young players.

SUNDAY RESULTS

In the opening matches, Qalhat Healthy Village Initiative defeated Oman LNG 3–1, with goals from Ahmed al Shaibi, Munir al Shaibi and Rabie al Shaibi, while Oman LNG’s goal came via an own goal.

The Directorate of Education and the Vocational College played out a goalless draw (0–0).

Oman Post secured a 3–1 victory over Madayn, courtesy of two goals from Mazen al Hashemi and one from Saud al Farsi, while Abdulaziz al Araiimi scored for Madayn.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Endowments and Religious Affairs overcame Al Tali’a Club 2–0 through goals by Abdullah al Daoudi and Abdullah al Mukhaini.

GOAL FEST

In Monday’s matches in Group 5, Sur Health City delivered an attacking masterclass to defeat Sur Hospital 7–3. Salim Said al Mukhaini netted a hat-trick, Mohammed Sayed Mahmoud scored twice, while Yousuf Mohammed Othman and Abdulkarim Faisal Hassan added one each.

Khamis Hilal al Araiimi scored twice and Abdulaziz Ali al Araiimi added one for Sur Hospital.

Group 6 witnessed a dominant 10–3 victory for the Directorate of Labour over Sohar Bank. Salem al Salti struck four times, Mohammed al Rahbi added three, Mazen al Araiimi scored twice and Saud al Rahbi contributed one. Musab al Qalahati, Mohammed al Farsi and Mazen al Masroori scored for Sohar Bank.

Group 7 ended in a balanced 2–2 draw between Omantel and the Directorate of Heritage and Tourism. Nawaf al Askari and Mahmoud al Alawi scored for Omantel, while Asim al Araiimi netted both goals for Heritage and Tourism.

In Group 8, Al Oruba Club edged the Directorate of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion 3–2, with Salem al Mukhaini scoring twice alongside an own goal, while Abdullah al Musharafi scored both goals for his side.

Supported by Oman LNG and organised by the Directorate of Culture, Sports and Youth in Sur, the tournament continues to promote community engagement and sporting spirit during the holy month of Ramadan, setting the stage for an exciting and competitive edition.



Al Nahda secured the HM Cup trophy after a commanding 2-0 victory over Oman Club in the final.

Al Nahda eye domestic treble after HM Cup win

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, FEB 24

AL NAHDA Club head coach, André Jasmins, declared that his side is fully determined to clinch all remaining domestic titles this season, following their recent success in lifting the prestigious HM Cup.

Al Nahda secured the coveted trophy after a commanding 2-0 victory over Oman Club in the final, marking a major milestone in the club’s campaign. The triumph strengthened the team’s ambition to make the 2025-26 season one of the most successful in its history.

“Our first mission has been accomplished by winning the HM Cup,” Jasmins told *Oman Observer*. “Now, our full focus shifts to the remaining competitions including the Jindal League and the OFA (Jetour) Cup. Our objective is clear as we want to win every domestic title available this season,” he said.

Despite their domestic success, Al Nahda narrowly missed out on qualification for the 2025–26 AGCFF Gulf Cup Champions League. The Portuguese tactician admitted that dropping crucial points during the group stage proved costly.

“We worked very hard to secure a place in the AGCFF Gulf Cup Champions League, but unfortunately, we missed that golden opportunity after losing important points in key group matches including the match against Saudi Arabia’s Al Shabab in Muscat



Al Nahda head coach André Jasmins

which ended in a 1-1 draw,” he explained.

RIISING TO CHALLENGE

Jasmins praised his players for their resilience, particularly during a demanding schedule that saw them compete in high-pressure continental fixtures alongside domestic commitments. “Before the HM Cup final, we had to play a crucial match against Saudi Arabia’s Al Shabab FC in the AGCFF Gulf Cup Champions League,” he said. “Our preparations for the final were not ideal because of that tight schedule but the players rose to the challenge.”

“They managed to overcome all these difficulties and delivered a fantastic performance in the final. I am very proud of the team and their fighting spirit,” he added.

Reflecting on the team’s continental campaign, Jasmins also addressed the defeat against Qatar’s Al Rayyan SC, acknowledging

the strength of the opposition. “As everyone knows, Al Rayyan is among the top clubs in Qatar and Asia. They have highly professional and talented players,” he said. “We worked extremely hard to compete against them and were close to achieving better results in several matches.”

He pointed to the 1-1 draw against Al Shabab in Muscat as an example of the team’s competitive level, noting that Al Nahda showed they could stand toe-to-toe with strong regional opponents.

STRONG POSITION

Domestically, Al Nahda continue to build momentum. The team recently secured a 2-0 victory over Ibri, bringing their tally to 25 points in the Jindal League standings. They are now preparing for a postponed league clash against Al Shabab Club on Thursday beside other postponed games which could prove crucial in their standing of the league. With confidence high following the HM Cup success, Jasmins believes consistency and mental strength will be key factors in the decisive phase of the season.

In his concluding remarks, the Portuguese coach emphasised that his long-term vision extends beyond winning trophies as it is about transforming the mindset within the squad. “We want to become the top and best team in Oman,” Jasmins stated firmly.

“To achieve that, the players must adopt a philosophy of winning every match. That mentality is essential if we want to dominate domestically and compete strongly at the regional level.”

Hodgkinson eyes breaking 800m outdoor record

LONDON: Olympic 800 metres champion Keely Hodgkinson believes breaking the oldest world record in athletics would cement her status among the greatest of all time in her discipline. The 23-year-old British runner, who won gold at the 2024 Paris Games, shaved almost a second off the world indoor record at a meeting in Lievin, France, on Thursday.

Hodgkinson now believes she is the “closest” she has been to lowering an 800m outdoor mark that has stood for over 40 years since Jarmila Kratochvilova of the then-Czechoslovakia posted a time of one minute 53.28 seconds in a July 1983 meet in Munich.

Kratochvilova’s mark, however, has long been shrouded in allegations of



Britain’s Keely Hodgkinson celebrates after breaking the world record in the 800m women final at the Athletics meeting ‘Hauts-de-France Pas-de-Calais’ as part of the World Indoor Tour Gold, in Lievin, France on February 19. — AFP

drug abuse — all of which she denies — amid reports of state-sponsored doping in ‘Eastern Bloc’ countries.

Hodgkinson was in no doubt about the significance of beating Kratochvilova’s time, telling the BBC: “I think the outdoor record would be cemented GOAT (greatest of all time). It’s stood for a long time and been a long time since anyone’s been able to get near it. I do think it’s possible.

“It’s a difficult record and a reason why it has stood for 40-odd years. It’s literally the oldest record on track so it will be a real accomplishment to get near it and hopefully break it. I think this is the closest I’ve felt near it. I do really believe that we can break it, but a lot of things have got to come together.” — AFP

SPORTS

PREMIER LEAGUE



Manchester United's Benjamin Sesko celebrates scoring their first goal against Everton at Hill Dickinson Stadium, Liverpool, Britain. — Reuters

SUPER-SUB SESKO SEALS MAN UTD WIN AT EVERTON

LIVERPOOL: Manchester United's Benjamin Sesko came off the bench to score a vital goal for the second game in a row as he fired the winner in a 1-0 Premier League win at Everton on Monday. Sesko sealed an uninspiring clash at the Hill Dickinson Stadium in the 71st minute as he swept in a clinical first-time shot from Bryan Mbeumo's pass after a flowing counter-attack started by Matheus Cunha's sublime pass. Victory sent Michael Carrick's United clear in fourth place in the table, three points ahead of Chelsea and Liverpool. Sesko's goal was a rare moment of quality in a scrappy match in which United almost took the lead in the opening minutes when James Tarkowski cleared an Amad Diallo effort off the line. United keeper Senne Lammens was called into action to deny teenager Harrison Armstrong before keeping out Michael Keane's thunderous long-range effort as Everton tried to reply. This was not a polished display by United, but it continued caretaker coach Carrick's impressive impact since taking charge. He has now won five and drawn one of his six games.

“It was really important for us to win this game. It was really difficult. We were fighting. They were fighting. It was a really 50-50 battle but we managed it until the end and secured the win.”

BENJAMIN SESKO

United have 48 points from 27 games, with Chelsea and Liverpool on 45. Everton huffed and puffed but struggled to gain any real momentum until the latter stages and are now without a win in their last seven home games in all competitions and stay in ninth place in the table. “I’m not happy with the scoreline, that’s for sure,” Everton manager David Moyes said. “You have to win games if you are going to keep moving on and we haven’t been doing that, especially here. “They got the one goal on the counter-attack and we put in a great effort to try and get the goal back but just lacked the quality to make it count.” Carrick has transformed United’s fortunes and they are now firmly in the hunt for Champions League qualification with Slovenian forward Sesko beginning to blossom after a slow start following his big-money move from RB Leipzig. He has now scored six goals in his last seven appearances for United, having managed only two goals before that. “We always feel as though we have a chance. The clean sheet was just as important as the goal. It was a fabulous goal,” Carrick said. “Ben is in a good place at the moment and we’ve had some really good talks about it. “He’s going to be a big player for us for a long period of time I’m sure of that.” — Reuters

Brook century leads England to T20 WC semis



England captain Harry Brook celebrates after scoring a century during the 2026 ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup Super Eights match between England and Pakistan at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium in Kandy on Tuesday. — AFP

ENGLAND captain Harry Brook smashed a blistering century to lead his side into the Twenty20 World Cup semifinals with a nail-biting two-wicket victory over Pakistan in their Super Eight match on Tuesday. Brook's heroics came after Pakistan's Shaheen Shah Afridi (4-30) had torn through England's top order with a devastating spell, leaving the former champions reeling at 35-3 chasing 165 for victory. The skipper notched his highest T20 international score, reaching three figures in 50 balls with 10 fours and four sixes before England stumbled over the line after losing wickets at the death.

DISASTROUS START TO CHASE England's chase got off to the worst possible start when wicketkeeper Usman Khan caught Phil Salt off the first ball of the innings by Afridi, and he also pouched Jos Buttler. Afridi's third victim was Jacob Bethell, caught in the deep, before Usman Tariq made amends for an earlier dropped catch by striking first ball to dismiss Tom Banton, with the keeper taking his third catch of the innings.



England captain Harry Brook (R) celebrates with teammate Will Jacks after scoring his century during the 2026 ICC T20 World Cup Super Eights match against Pakistan. — AFP

Brook was the only player to thrive with the bat even as England slid to 103-5 and he continued to lose partners before Afridi returned for his final over and claimed the captain's wicket with his last ball. Afridi was the first to shake Brook's hand as he walked back to the pavilion and England still needed 10 runs to win before

Mohammad Nawaz picked up two wickets in the penultimate over to set up a tense finish. Fast bowler Jofra Archer hit the winning runs with a boundary as England crossed the line with five balls to spare. PAKISTAN OPT TO BAT Earlier, Pakistan opted to bat first after winning the toss, but could not make the powerplay count as sharp catching from England reduced the Asian side to 27-2. Saim Ayub fell to a short Archer delivery when he was caught at deep backward square leg and Liam Dawson dismissed skipper Salman Agha after Jamie Overton took a diving catch. Babar Azam (25) looked in good form when he smashed Archer for consecutive boundaries but Overton came into the attack and knocked over his stumps to leave Pakistan wobbling at 73-3 after 11 overs. Opener Sahibzada Farhan (63 off 45) continued to frustrate the England bowlers with seven fours and two sixes as he brought up his half-century before being trapped lbw by Overton. Fakhar Zaman chipped in with a quickfire 25 and Shadab Khan (23) batted with Pakistan's tail to post a total that was ultimately a few runs short. — Reuters



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BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$70.42
BRENT \$71.06
LIGHT \$66.31



SHORT TAKES



Al Dhahirah Governorate recorded the highest inflation at 2.3 per cent.

JANUARY INFLATION UP 1.4% IN OMAN

MUSCAT: Oman’s general consumer price index rose by 1.4 per cent in January 2026 compared to the same month in 2025, based on the 2018 base year, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The highest increase was recorded in the miscellaneous personal goods and services group, which surged by 13.2 per cent. This was followed by restaurants and hotels at 5.9 per cent, furniture, furnishings and household maintenance at 2.6 per cent, education at 2.2 per cent, health at 1.7 per cent, food and non-alcoholic beverages at 0.9 per cent, and clothing and footwear at 0.1 per cent. In contrast, the transport group declined by 1.4 per cent.

Prices in housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels, as well as culture and entertainment, tobacco and communications, remained unchanged.

Within the food and non-alcoholic beverages category, fruit prices rose by 5.2 per cent, sugar, jam, honey and sweets by 3.3 per cent, meat and dairy products by 2.0 per cent each, other food items by 1.7 per cent, oils and fats by 0.7 per cent, soft beverages by 0.5 per cent and bread and cereals by 0.4 per cent.

Meanwhile, fish prices fell by 5.4 per cent and vegetables by 1.4 per cent.

Regionally, Al Dhahirah Governorate recorded the highest inflation at 2.3 per cent, followed by Muscat Governorate (1.9 per cent), Al Buraimi Governorate (1.8 per cent), Al Dakhiliyah Governorate (1.5 per cent) and Al Batinah South Governorate (1.3 per cent). Al Sharqiyah South Governorate and Musandam Governorate both posted 1.0 per cent, while Dhofar Governorate and Al Batinah North Governorate rose by 0.4 per cent. Al Sharqiyah North Governorate and Al Wusta Governorate recorded the lowest increase at 0.3 per cent. — ONA

Meranti Steel outlines phased hydrogen plan

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, FEB 24

SINGAPORE headquartered steel producer Meranti Green Steel plans to develop its proposed Duqm hot briquetted iron (HBI) project through a phased energy transition model, starting with a fuel mix of 11.5 per cent green hydrogen and 88.5 per cent natural gas, while arranging a financing package that combines international and local funding, the company’s chief executive said.

Speaking during the opening of the company’s Muscat office, CEO Dr Sebastian Langendorf said Meranti wants to use green hydrogen “as soon as it is available”, but stressed that availability must be matched by technical feasibility, environmental performance and commercial bankability.

He said the company is working with Amnah — a consortium awarded a concession to develop an integrated green hydrogen project in Al Duqm — on co-development and engineering to help shape a hydrogen supply profile suitable for the project.

“We are not only waiting until it is available. We want to be part of making it available”, he said, referring to green hydrogen supply.

Langendorf said the targeted start-up mix of 11.5 per cent green hydrogen and 88.5 per cent gas reflects the country’s energy transition plan, with the hydrogen share expected to rise over time.

Meranti’s interest in Oman, he explained, emerged through work tied to its raw material strategy and discussions linked to a major iron ore partner, as the company explored options to produce low-carbon HBI.

He said Al Duqm stood out



Meranti’s interest in Oman emerged through work tied to its raw material strategy and discussions linked to a major iron ore partner, as the company explored options to produce low-carbon HBI. Al Duqm stood out because of its renewable energy potential, strategic location, infrastructure and policy support, describing Oman as a competitive base for the project.

DR SEBASTIAN
LANGENDORF
CEO, Meranti Green Steel

because of its renewable energy potential, strategic location, infrastructure and policy support, describing Oman as a competitive base for the project.

The CEO also linked the Duqm project to Meranti’s downstream plans in Thailand, where the company is developing steelmaking capacity for the local market, including automotive demand.

He said the Thailand project will use scrap, but also requires HBI to meet quality requirements, making Al Duqm a strategic feedstock source.

Langendorf said Meranti moved from early exploration to deeper engagement in roughly three to four months and after about 18 months of work is now strongly committed to building in Al Duqm.

He cited engagement with Omani institutions including Invest Oman, Integrated Gas Company (IGC) and Hydrom, and praised the level of alignment and support received.

On project status, Langendorf said Meranti has obtained a conditional gas allocation from IGC and a conditional investment permit from Invest Oman, describing them as key milestones.

He declined to disclose gas pricing, but said the company does not judge Oman’s value proposition on price alone. Rather than asking whether gas is “cheap”, he said, Meranti evaluates whether Oman is competitive when all factors are considered, including political stability, long-term vision, government support, logistics, infrastructure and workforce potential.

Langendorf said the project is currently financed by Meranti Green Steel at the corporate level, but the company is now moving to raise dedicated financing for the

Oman project.

He said a banking group led by KfW IPEX-Bank of Germany is working on a financing package and that the company hopes to secure export credit agency (ECA) cover to improve funding competitiveness.

He added that Meranti is already in discussions with three local banks for a local debt component, while the international debt portion is expected to be larger.

On equity, he said the final split between international and local investors has not yet been determined. Meranti is working with EY as financial adviser to structure the funding mix, he added.

Langendorf said Meranti has agreed an in-country value (ICV) commitment with Invest Oman, but did not disclose targets. He said the company sees ICV as more than a numbers exercise and intends to build a project with strong local participation in labour, management and procurement, with local sourcing used where feasible.

He added that a gradual hydrogen ramp-up is essential to keep the project commercially viable, noting that hydrogen remains more expensive than gas-based solutions and that customer willingness to pay a premium is still developing.

Over the longer term, he said, Meranti remains confident in Oman’s hydrogen opportunity, provided the transition is implemented step by step and supported by flexible regulation and infrastructure growth.

Envisioned for development at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) is a 2.5 million-tonne-per-year HBI plant in the first phase. A Final Investment Decision is anticipated by mid-2026, with commissioning targeted for mid-2029.

Pact to advance vertiport infrastructure in Oman

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, FEB 24

In a further boost for the Sultanate of Oman’s Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) ambitions, AeroVecto, the Omani aviation services company developing hybrid-electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, has announced a significant partnership with LYNEports, an AI-driven digital planning platform, to support vertiport development in Oman and the wider Middle East.

Vertiports are specialised take-off and landing facilities for short-range air transport, air taxis and cargo drones that enable urban and regional aerial mobility.

Functioning as mini airports for advanced air mobility, they typically feature vertical landing pads, passenger areas, charging infrastructure for electric aircraft, air traffic and operational control systems, safety and security provisions; and connections to ground transport such as cars and buses.

The partnership builds on an initial memorandum of understanding on aircraft integration and has evolved into



Vertiports are specialised take-off and landing facilities for short-range air transport, air taxis and cargo drones that enable aerial mobility.

a broader commercial alliance combining digital infrastructure intelligence and aerospace expertise to assist cities, developers and authorities preparing for advanced air mobility, according to a statement from AeroVecto.

“It strengthens Oman’s position in the regional aerial mobility landscape and provides local stakeholders with access to world-class planning tools combined with homegrown aviation capability”, said Fahad al Riyami, CEO of AeroVecto.

The collaboration draws on complementary strengths. LYNEports contributes its AI-native digital twin platform for vertiport planning, airport modernisation and drone corridor design, translating complex aviation regulations into visual, decision-ready tools accessible to non-aviation stakeholders.

AeroVecto brings deep expertise in manufacturing, aerospace engineering and operational capabilities rooted in Oman’s aviation ecosystem. Together, the

partners aim to bridge the gap between concept and execution, helping governments and private sector leaders translate advanced air mobility ideas into practical, implementable projects.

AeroVecto has been developing the ‘Shuttle’, a hybrid-electric eVTOL aircraft designed to transform public and urban transport across Oman and the GCC through scalable, clean aerial mobility.

Its Aviation Services division supports operations,

infrastructure planning and strategic partnerships that help build the ecosystem for eVTOL deployment, aligning with sustainability and economic diversification objectives.

LYNEports enables stakeholders to design, simulate and evaluate vertiport and aviation facilities for eVTOL and future aircraft.

Its software integrates geospatial analysis, 3D modelling, regulatory compliance checks and flight path simulation to streamline early-stage planning and support safe, efficient integration of aerial mobility into transport networks.

The platform assists planners, developers, architects and regulators in optimising site selection and infrastructure design for next-generation air transport systems.

Oman aims to build a modern advanced air mobility ecosystem by integrating drones, eVTOL aircraft and supporting infrastructure through regulatory frameworks and partnerships.

The initiative seeks to enhance connectivity and tourism while advancing sustainable transport and economic diversification in line with Oman Vision 2040.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The Oud Zuhal is a limited-edition composition, released only in the GCC region.

AMOUAGE ADDS OUD ZUHAL TO ITS ESSENCES COLLECTION

MUSCAT: At the House of Amouage, the process of creativity is as important as its end result — it is only through a fearless refinement of the process that true artistry is achieved. Nowhere is this more evident than in the acclaimed Essences Collection, which, by virtue of its ingenious double-infusion process, marks a milestone in the development of perfume composition.

Now, a new feat of innovation joins the collection in the form of the astronomically-inspired Oud Zuhal — a limited-edition composition, released only in the GCC region to coincide with the Ramadhan period.

“With the first Essences”, says Renaud Salmon, Chief Creative Officer at the esteemed Omani High Perfumery House, “we used sandalwood as the material for infusing the perfume concentrate. But during the development process, I experimented with other ingredients, including frankincense tears and cardamom pods”.

The effects of these alternative ‘infusion substances’ were certainly thought-provoking, but there was one ingredient which led to especially promising results.

“When I tried an infusion with oud chips, the impact on the concentrates was remarkable. It gave them a depth and timelessness that was quite distinct from the attributes of the sandalwood — a sense of the past being heard within the perfume itself”. This notion of ageless authority would be the starting point for Oud Zuhal.

LOOKING UP TO THE COSMOS

Over its 42-year history, Amouage has built up a remarkable inventory of ingredients and bases, used by its in-house compounding experts to blend some of its mythical attars. As part of the development of the Essences, Salmon asked for these materials to be employed in the creation of an archetypal Amouage composition, with the intention of using it as a testing medium for the infusing effect of oud chips.

“The blend that was presented to me was created purely for research purposes. But there was something so magical about it that I was compelled not only to make it available to our clientele, but also to use it completely unchanged”.

The initial stages of the process were not without their obstacles. Various technical barriers had to be overcome to ascertain the correct proportion of oud chips to perfume concentrate. All these trials required a considerable amount of patience, which in turn made Salmon explore the concepts of perseverance, endurance and of waiting for the right time to reap rewards.

Sohar Al Attaa initiative supports over 100 families

MUSCAT: As part of their steadfast commitment to advancing national economic development and fostering community progress, Sohar International and Sohar Islamic launched their charitable initiative, ‘Sohar Al Attaa’, in conjunction with the Holy Month of Ramadhan.

The initiative was carried out in collaboration with the Walis’ Offices in the Wilayats of Mahout and Al Jazir; and in coordination with several charitable teams operating across both Wilayats. This collaboration reflects a structured institutional approach aimed at ensuring aid is delivered to eligible beneficiaries, strengthening sustainable community partnerships and extending support



The initiative was carried out in the Wilayats of Mahout and Al Jazir.

to the communities they serve — particularly in remote areas and among the most vulnerable segments.

As part of the Ramadhan initiative, comprehensive food supply boxes and fish preservation freezers were distributed to 100

AHLIBANK LAUNCHES ITS RAMADHAN CSR CAMPAIGN

MUSCAT: As a testament to its enduring commitment to responsible social impact and inclusive development, ahlibank officially launched its Ramadhan CSR campaign at a dedicated event held at its Head Office.

The event brought together senior leadership representatives from the bank, alongside key external stakeholders and received notable media interest, reflecting the significance of the initiative within the broader social landscape.



As part of the event proceedings, ahlibank, represented by its ‘ahli Cares’ team, established a series of partnerships with charitable and social welfare organisations.

The bank signed a strategic

agreement with – Riyada to continue empowering SMEs through the fourth edition of the ahlibank Ramadhan Souq, reinforcing their economic sustainability.

The second agreement featured partnership with Al Rahma Association for Motherhood and Childhood which aims to support widows and divorced mothers caring for orphans by providing essential home appliances under the ‘SAS’ housing initiative.

Saud Bahwan launches all-new Toyota RAV4

IN a celebration of innovation and style, Saud Bahwan Automotive has officially launched the all-new Toyota RAV4 HEV — 6th generation RAV4. Introduced under the vibrant tagline “RAV4: Life is an Adventure”, the iconic SUV made its grand debut at a special ceremony in Muscat, marking a bold new chapter for mobility.

The premiere, attended by distinguished guests and automotive enthusiasts, highlighted the RAV4’s evolution into a more powerful, tech-forward and eco-conscious companion designed to dominate both urban streets and rugged terrains.

The event captured the high-energy spirit of the RAV4, which has been completely redesigned to offer more excitement and comfort.

Featuring the latest 5th generation Toyota Hybrid System, the 2026 RAV4 HEV is built to give drivers more confidence on the road while being kinder to the environment.

With its sporty new look and advanced features, the new model allows owners to broaden their horizons and reach their destinations with unmatched style.

Welcoming the guests to the event, a senior representative from Saud Bahwan Automotive remarked: “It is a moment of great pride for us to introduce the all-new RAV4 HEV to our customers.

This vehicle has always been a symbol of reliability in the Sultanate of Oman, but the 2026 model takes that trust into a new era of electrification. We are committed to bringing



The RAV4 HEV is built to give drivers more confidence on the road while being kinder to the environment.

the best of Toyota’s global innovations to Oman, ensuring that every drive is not just a journey, but an experience full of life and excitement”.

Highlighting the vehicle’s capabilities during the presentation, the spokesperson added: “The all-new RAV4 HEV is designed to positively touch your attitude and stimulate your mind to go out and achieve more.

With 236 horsepower and the latest safety technology, it offers a perfect balance of performance and responsibility.

Whether it is the sleek city design or the rugged Adventure grade, this SUV is built to

make a mark on every road it travels, backed by our dedicated service and support across the country”.

The 2026 RAV4 HEV stands out with a strong and modern exterior design. It features bright Bi-LED Headlamps with Auto Levelling and a Panoramic Moon roof that makes the cabin feel open and premium.

For those who love a more rugged look, the Adventure Grade comes with a special front grille, unique bumpers and 18-inch Matt Gray Metallic Alloy Wheels.

The rear of the vehicle is just as impressive, featuring LED lights and a Power Back Door for easy access.

GWM Oman unveils new HAVAL V7

MUSCAT: GWM Oman has officially unveiled the all-new HAVAL V7, the brand’s latest mid-size SUV designed to meet the evolving lifestyles of drivers across the Sultanate of Oman. Blending refined urban comfort with confident capability across Oman’s diverse terrains, the HAVAL V7 delivers on its promise: A Venture for Every Lifestyle.

Developed with the Omani driver in mind, the HAVAL V7 is engineered for seamless daily commuting in Muscat, long highway drives between cities and weekend escapes to the mountains, wadis and desert landscapes. It offers versatility without



compromise for those who expect more from their SUV.

Designed for Oman. Ready for Every Road. With a bold and contemporary SUV stance, the HAVAL V7 measures 4,800 mm in length, 1,950 mm in width and 1,843 mm

in height, ensuring strong road presence while maintaining everyday practicality. Under the hood, the V7 is powered by a 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine paired with a 9-speed Dual-Clutch Transmission (9DCT), delivering 228 HP and 380 Nm of torque — providing responsive acceleration suited for both city driving and open-road performance.

Customers in Oman benefit from the intelligent 4WD configuration, supported by HAVAL’s advanced All-Terrain Control System, designed to confidently handle the country’s diverse driving conditions.

SHORTTAKES



The Centre is a prototyping centre representing the pre-commercial stage of project ideas.

PACT FOR OPERATION OF MAKERS OMAN CENTRE SIGNED

MUSCAT: The Industrial Innovation Academy, the enabling arm of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates “Madayn”, has signed an agreement with Bara’ah Academy to operate Makers Oman Centre. The agreement aims to promote the centre, provide training services and accredited certifications, support entrepreneurs and startups in developing market-ready products and organise community initiatives to raise awareness about manufacturing and manufacturing-related programmes.

Makers Oman Centre is a prototyping centre representing the pre-commercial stage of project ideas. The centre features open workshops and a prototyping design lab for manufacturing, which present an ideal environment for innovation and entrepreneurship.

The centre is equipped with a range of machinery and equipment to support prototype production, while entrepreneurs can benefit from access to tools and workspace.

The centre includes several units: metal fabrication unit, 3D printing unit, wood manufacturing unit and a multipurpose hall. The centre’s operational tracks focus on business incubation and SMEs development, capacity building through technical and specialised training services; and prototyping and innovation.

OMAN BANKS BUILD CLIMATE FINANCE SKILLS



MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank hosted a workshop on capacity building in climate finance for Omani banks at its headquarters on Tuesday. The event was organised by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, in cooperation with the Oman Banks Association.

The workshop focused on global trends in climate finance, priority investment sectors in the Sultanate of Oman, climate-related risk management and international best practices and standards. Climate finance specialists from the IFC led technical sessions supported by practical insights and case studies aimed at strengthening banks’ ability to expand sustainable finance portfolios.

Ali bin Saif al Maani, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank, said hosting the workshop reflects the bank’s strong commitment to environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles. He added that the bank continues to align its strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals and Oman Vision 2040, supporting the Sultanate of Oman’s transition towards a net-zero future.

MONETARY STABILITY

China holds key interest rates



China’s central bank kept its benchmark lending rates unchanged for the ninth consecutive month, signalling policy continuity to support economic recovery.

The China maintained the one-year loan prime rate at 3.0% and the five-year rate at 3.5%, in line with market expectations. The move underscores Beijing’s cautious approach amidst uneven growth momentum. — Reuters

MARKET PRESSURE

Gold retreats as dollar firms



Gold prices slipped from a three-week high on Tuesday as a stronger US dollar weighed on investor demand.

Spot gold fell 1.5 per cent to \$5,150.38 an ounce, while United States April futures declined 1.1 per cent to \$5,170.70.

Other precious metals also weakened, including silver, platinum and palladium posting sharp losses in spot trading. — Reuters

TRADE MEASURES

US imposes 10% tariff



The United States has imposed a new 10 per cent tariff on most imports not covered by exemptions, according to United States Customs and Border Protection.

WThe move followed a US Supreme Court ruling overturning earlier tariffs by President Donald Trump. President Donald Trump had earlier indicated a higher rate before confirming the lower levy. — Reuters

Sultan Haitham City’s first phase to launch this year

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, FEB 24

A part of the first phase of Sultan Haitham City is expected to be opened this year, with infrastructure and service works advancing and around 1,700 housing units already sold, according to Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning.

Addressing the maiden Ramadhan lecture hosted by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Monday, February 23, 2026, he said the Sultan Haitham City project targets about 20,000 housing units in total, at a pace of roughly 1,000 units annually, adding that infrastructure investment in the Phases 1 and 2 stands at around RO 300 million.

He said 70% of tenders in Phases 1 and 2 are under execution, with roads and services being rolled out progressively, and expressed hope that part of the first phase would open during the current year.

The minister said demand for the city was growing, noting that buyers from more than 35 nationalities had purchased units in Sultan Haitham City, while eight developers are participating and competing for additional opportunities.

He said prices are around RO 900 per square metre for investors, compared with about RO 400 per square metre for Omani families, adding that state support for Omani households exceeds 50%. He urged the public to take advantage of the opportunities available in the project.



70% of tenders in Phases 1 and 2 of Sultan Haitham City are under execution, with roads and services being rolled out progressively: Dr Al Shueili

On the wider market, Dr Al Shueili said the future shape of Oman’s real estate sector had become clearer after a five-year period of reforms and implementation, adding that the Sultanate of Oman had built a strong legislative and regulatory base compared with regional markets.

He said the Real Estate Development Law marked an important step in organising the sector and revealed that a new regulation is expected in the coming months to govern additional aspects of the market while safeguarding the rights of both consumers and industry participants.

Dr Al Shueili said the next phase would focus on regulation, programmes and digital systems to strengthen efficiency and place the sector on a firmer footing.

On property finance, the

minister said financing remains one of the sector’s challenges, but noted “good alignment” from the banking sector led by the Central Bank of Oman. From the ministry’s perspective, developers do not face a major challenge in securing finance, particularly with the off-plan sales policy in place, he said.

However, he noted that the challenge is more concentrated among some eligible Omani beneficiaries in certain programmes, with financing issues affecting around 30% in some cases.

The ministry is working with the Oman Housing Bank to address those issues, he added, while also pursuing a tax exemption for first homes, a file currently under discussion among the relevant authorities.

Dr Al Shueili also said the ministry offers programmes that enable citizens to act as

developers of their own homes, with usufruct plot sizes ranging from 500 sq metres to 4,000 sq metres.

He said the number of contracts had risen from more than 1,000 in previous years to around 13,000 currently, with annual growth of no less than 10%. The success rate among land beneficiaries has reached around 70%, he added, while the withdrawal of undeveloped land plots continues.

The minister said the “Sorouh” programme, launched in 2015, had overcome early challenges and now includes more than 20 projects led by Omani institutions across more than 12 locations.

The ministry is targeting 60 projects in the coming years under integrated residential complexes, with each project ranging from 150 to 1,000 housing units, he added.

Insurance firms pay RO 79.8 million in motor claims

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 24

Preliminary data from the Financial Services Authority (FSA) show that insurance firms recorded around 75,300 traffic accidents in 2025, compared with 75,200 in 2024, a slight rise of 0.1 per cent.

Of these, 54,271 were minor accidents, representing about 72.1 per cent of the total, while 20,993 were serious, around 27.9 per cent. Serious accidents saw a notable increase of 13.2 per cent from 2024, reflecting a qualitative shift towards more serious incidents.

Data show that the total number of traffic accident claims in 2025 exceeded 77,000, compared with 76,500 claims in 2024, marking a 1 per cent increase.



Serious accidents saw a notable increase of 13.2 per cent from 2024, reflecting a qualitative shift towards more serious incidents.

Claims for minor accidents fell to over 54,000, down from 56,200 in 2024, a decline of 4 per cent. In contrast, claims for serious accidents causing only material damage rose to around 11,000, up from 9,900 in 2024, an

increase of 10 per cent.

Claims for serious accidents involving injuries and medical expenses reached nearly 12,000, compared with 10,000 the previous year, up 17 per cent, while fatality claims totalled

342, slightly higher than 333 in 2024, an increase of 3 per cent.

Total compensation in 2025 exceeded RO 79.8 million, compared with RO 78.7 million in 2024, an increase of 1.47 per cent. This includes both paid compensation and claims under settlement.

The distribution of compensation was as follows: RO 34.04 million for minor accidents, down 9.1 per cent; RO 18.88 million for serious accidents with material damage; and over RO 22.47 million for serious accidents involving injuries and medical expenses, a notable rise of 26.67 per cent compared with RO 17.7 million in 2024.

Compensation for fatalities fell to RO 4.45 million, a decrease of 7.15 per cent from RO 4.8 million in 2024.

OPINION

How AI is reshaping corporate governance and D&O risk



**CYRIL ANTONY
GEORGE**

*The writer is
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ONCE the citadel of human judgment and facultative discernment, corporate governance has rapidly evolved to absorb extensive inputs from artificial intelligence tools. AI today resembles a gold rush, with governance and regulation still playing catch-up. Unsurprisingly, this imbalance is driving a steady expansion of Directors’ and Officers’ (D&O) liability exposure.

At the heart of AI lies a fundamental and uncomfortable paradox: the more powerful and complex AI systems become, the less transparent they are to human oversight. Functionally, this opacity makes it difficult to trace, explain, or correct problematic outcomes. Ethically, it raises a more profound question — how can organisations place trust in systems whose decision-making logic is not fully understood, even by their creators?

Recent high-profile cases illustrate how AI deployments can fall foul of regulators and public scrutiny.

One such example is the Apple Card controversy, where allegations surfaced that algorithms used to set credit limits disproportionately disadvantaged women. Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak publicly complained about the issue, prompting regulatory attention.

Goldman Sachs, the issuing bank, stated that its credit decisions were based solely on creditworthiness and not on prohibited factors such as gender or race. While investigations highlighted the complexity of algorithmic credit models rather than

deliberate discrimination, the episode underscored the reputational and governance risks associated with opaque AI systems.

Another widely cited case is COMPAS (Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions), an algorithm used in several US jurisdictions to assess recidivism risk. Investigations and academic studies have criticised the tool for exhibiting racial bias, particularly in flagging Black defendants as higher risk at disproportionately higher rates.

Although COMPAS developers have contested some of these findings, the controversy demonstrated how algorithmic outputs could materially influence life-altering decisions — and expose institutions to legal and ethical challenges.

Bias can creep into AI models from multiple sources: historical datasets that reflect entrenched socio-economic inequalities, under-representation of disadvantaged groups in AI development teams and flawed testing or validation protocols.

As organisations integrate AI into core operations and products, directors and officers must navigate an increasingly complex risk environment — one that is already testing the limits of existing insurance frameworks.

To mitigate AI-related D&O liability, corporate governance structures must evolve. Key measures include:

Bias audits: Routine, mandatory and independent assessments to detect and correct distortions in AI models.

As AI embeds itself into corporate decision-making, boards face a growing paradox: powerful systems that deliver efficiency but defy transparency. From bias and “AI washing” to aggregation risk, directors and officers are entering a new liability landscape — one insurers are already pricing in.

Transparency mandates: Clear insight into decision logic, particularly for consequential outcomes such as loan approvals, recruitment, or legal assessments.

Accountability hierarchies: Defined governance roles, including AI compliance or ethics officers, to manage oversight and respond to failures.

Legal alignment: Adherence to emerging regulatory regimes, such as the EU AI Act, to ensure both functional and ethical compliance.

Hybrid decision models: Retaining meaningful human judgment at critical AI decision points.

Beyond bias, boards must also confront the growing risk of ‘AI washing’ — the exaggeration or misrepresentation of AI capabilities to investors and stakeholders. A notable case involves Albert Saniger, founder and former CEO of Nate Inc, who is facing enforcement action in the US for allegedly making materially false and misleading statements about the company’s AI capabilities in order to raise funds. The case sends a clear signal: misrepresentation of AI use or sophistication can trigger regulatory action with direct consequences for directors and officers.

Another emerging concern is aggregation risk. Traditionally associated with insurers covering multiple properties in a single geographic area, aggregation risk in the AI era may arise when a common algorithm, model, or data dependency simultaneously affects multiple companies, sectors, or jurisdictions.

The blue economy:
Between legislation,
regulation and markets



**MURTADHA M J
IBRAHIM
AL JAMALANI**

*The writer is an
insurance expert &
economist researcher*

The Sultanate of Oman enjoys a unique geographical position at the southeastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. It overlooks the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Arabian Gulf, with an extensive coastline that provides a strategic advantage in maritime trade, food security and the development of the blue economy.

This advantage extends beyond geography. Oman possesses rich marine and water resources, experienced human capital with deep-rooted maritime heritage, growing infrastructure, established safety and security systems; and a legal and regulatory framework that supports sustainable investment and development.

First: A Notable Institutional Initiative (2018–2022): Between 2018 and 2022, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, represented by its Finance and Insurance Committee, launched an initiative to organise the work of fishermen associations following the issuance of the Water Resources Protection Law. This was done in cooperation with: The Development Bank, Financial Services Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and Royal Oman Police (Coast Guard).

This initiative resulted in the following: The preparation of a Unified Insurance Policy for artisanal fishing boats and equipment; Personal accident coverage for fishermen; and The development of Operation Manuals to standardise procedures and enhance safety compliance. This step strengthened insurance protection, improved governance standards and reinforced institutional discipline within the sector.

Second: The need for institutional integration to maximise national benefit, the following steps are essential: (1) Establishing and strengthening professional fishermen associations across all governorates; (2) Creating centralised marketing companies to improve quality control and increase value addition; and (3) Developing specialised financing and insurance mechanisms to ensure sustainability.

Third: A Strategic Proposal — A Central Commodity Market: It is timely to consider establishing a Central Commodity Market modelled after the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), serving as a transparent and regulated platform for trading marine and agricultural products.

How can Oman avoid billion-dollar mistakes?

AS Oman awaits the formal unveiling of the Muscat Metro within the coming months, following confirmation by Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, under a new national transport tracking initiative, the country stands at a decisive moment. This is not merely the announcement of a transport project.

It is a test of how Oman intends to deliver the ambitions of Oman Vision 2040 — through discipline, foresight and institutional maturity, or through costly trial and error.

The proposed network is ambitious and necessary: a 50-kilometre metro line with approximately 36 stations, linking Sultan Haitham City to Ruwi’s Central Business District.

Yet ambition alone does not guarantee success. Around the world, mega rail projects have repeatedly demonstrated that failure is rarely caused by engineering limitations, but by governance failure.

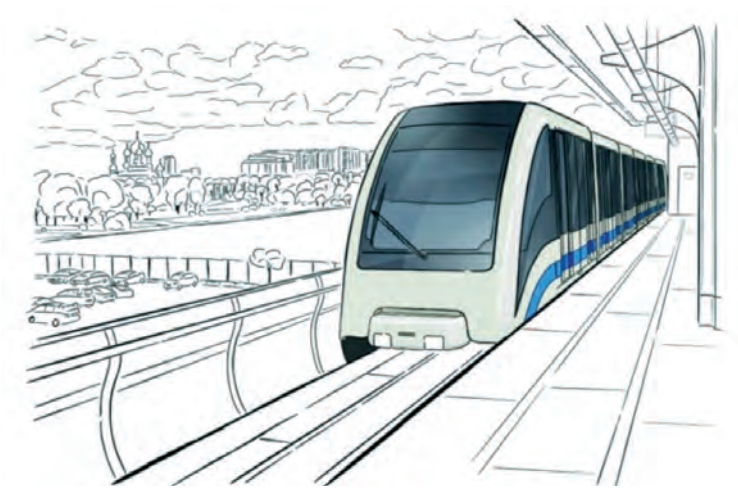
Oman has a rare advantage: it can learn from the mistakes of others before breaking ground.

GOVERNANCE COMES FIRST: EXPERTISE MUST SIT WITH THE OWNER

Few infrastructure projects offer a clearer warning than the United Kingdom’s High Speed 2 (HS2). Initially conceived as a transformative national rail spine, HS2 is now on track to become the most expensive railway per kilometre ever built, with projected costs approaching £100 billion.

The primary driver of this escalation was not complexity, but institutional weakness.

The British government lacked sufficient in-house technical capability and became heavily



The proposed network is ambitious and necessary: a 50-kilometre metro line with approximately 36 stations, linking Sultan Haitham City to Ruwi’s Central Business District.



**DR AMMAR
AL BALUSHI**

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Majan University
College*

dependent on external consultants embedded within the project’s management structure. Many contractors operated under “cost-plus” contracts — arrangements that reward higher spending rather than efficiency. As documented by the Financial Times, the incentive was simple: the more money spent, the more money earned.

The lesson for Muscat is clear. The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology must retain the intellectual ownership of the project. The “brain” of the metro cannot be outsourced.

Oman would be wise to study the Japanese model underpinning the Shinkansen network.

In Japan, the Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency (JRTT) operates as a technically competent public body responsible for route planning, cost estimation and rigorous design review.

Contractors build — but they do not define scope, budgets, or strategy. This separation of authority is precisely what keeps costs under control.

For Muscat Metro to succeed, oversight bodies must have the technical strength to challenge contractors, not merely approve invoices.

PRAGMATISM OVER SYMBOLISM

HS2’s problems were compounded by a fixation on symbolic ambition. The project specified a design speed of 400 km/h — faster than any other European rail line — despite relatively short inter-city distances.

This decision imposed extreme engineering requirements, forcing extensive tunnelling and long viaducts to maintain near-perfect alignment.

The result was spiralling cost with marginal public benefit.

The project also suffered from architectural excess. Structures such as the Colne Valley Viaduct were designed with thousands of unique, bespoke components — visually striking, but financially draining.

Muscat Metro must avoid this trap. It is not a cross-country bullet train. It is an urban mobility system whose primary objective is to prevent average traffic speeds in the capital from falling to a projected 27 km/h by 2030.

Its success should be measured in reliability, capacity and affordability — not architectural spectacle.

A standardised, modular approach to station design would significantly reduce construction costs and timelines. Replicable engineering solutions are not a compromise; they are the hallmark of mature infrastructure systems.

Standardisation, however, need not mean uniformity. The Stockholm Metro offers a compelling example. Often described as the world’s longest art gallery, it uses consistent structural engineering while allowing artistic expression to define each station’s identity.

Muscat could adopt the same philosophy: standard structural shells enhanced by locally commissioned Omani art reflecting the identity of each wilayat — from the Al Hajar Mountains to the Frankincense Trail.

This approach preserves cultural character while maintaining financial discipline.

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, jjilmathew@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

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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

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THE QUIET POWER OF MASS IFTAR

YERU EBUEN

JUST before sunset, outside a neighbourhood mosque in Oman, the lawn begins to transform. Carpets are rolled out in long, careful lines. Plastic bottles of water are stacked in neat rows. Small boxes of rice, dates and laban are placed one by one in front of where each person will sit. There is no ticketing system, no guest list, no hierarchy. By the time the light softens into gold, dozens of men are already seated shoulder to shoulder, an easy chatter rising and falling between them. Some are Omani. Many are not. All are waiting for the same sound.

For someone unfamiliar with Ramadhan, the scene can be quietly disarming.

Mass Iftar, the communal breaking of the fast at sunset, has become a familiar sight across Oman during the holy month. While many families gather at home to break their fast, mosque lawns and open spaces across the country host large-scale public meals every evening. The numbers depend on the location and the organisers. In smaller towns, it may be a few dozen worshippers. In larger city mosques, the rows can stretch into the hundreds.

The mechanics are simple in concept, but carefully organised in practice. Funding usually comes from private donors, local businesses or families sponsoring an evening in memory of a loved one. Mosque committees oversee the coordination. Volunteers arrive well before Maghrib prayer to lay carpets, distribute food packs and make sure there is enough water and dates for everyone. The meals are often modest: dates, water, rice, perhaps a portion of meat or curry. The aim is not indulgence, but accessibility.

An organiser in Muscat was quoted in local media saying, “The goal is that no one breaks their fast alone. Feeding a fasting person carries great reward.” The sentiment surfaces repeatedly online. Each year, short videos of packed mosque courtyards circulate widely, accompanied by captions such as: “This is Ramadhan



Charity and community sit at the heart of Islam, and feeding others during Ramadhan is regarded as both a spiritual act and a social responsibility. In a country as diverse as Oman, where expatriates form a significant part of the population, mass iftar becomes a visible expression of inclusion.

in Oman. All equal, all together.” In the comments, people speak of unity, humility and peace.

From the perspective of a non-Muslim observer, what stands out first is not the food, but the anticipation. The men seated on the carpets speak easily among themselves. There is laughter, small talk, the occasional glance at a watch or phone. Yet as the sun lowers, something shifts. The chatter softens. Faces turn towards the mosque loudspeakers. Everyone is waiting for the Adhan, the call to prayer that signals the end of the day’s fast.

A recent tourist who joined a mass Iftar for the first time described the experience online as “unexpectedly heartwarming”. He admitted he had little understanding of Ramadhan beyond knowing that Muslims abstain from food and drink during daylight hours. “Sitting there,” he wrote, “waiting with everyone for that call to prayer, I realised how disciplined and communal this month is. When the

prayer sounded, it felt like a collective exhale.”

That shared moment is perhaps the defining feature of mass Iftar. The instant the call to prayer begins, hands move almost in unison towards dates and water. There is no scramble, no rush. Just a quiet, collective acknowledgement that the fast, observed from dawn, has come to an end. For a few minutes, the act is focused and subdued. Afterwards, conversation resumes and the meal unfolds more freely.

At its core, mass Iftar is rooted in religious principle. Charity and community sit at the heart of Islam, and feeding others during Ramadhan is regarded as both a spiritual act and a social responsibility. In a country as diverse as Oman, where expatriates form a significant part of the population, mass Iftar becomes a visible expression of inclusion. Labourers, office workers, students, long-term residents and visitors sit in the same line, on the same

carpet, eating the same meal.

Organisers often repeat a simple reassurance: everyone is welcome. There is no requirement to prove one’s faith or background. For some, it provides practical support after a long day of work. For others, it is about companionship. For a newcomer witnessing it for the first time, it can feel like stepping into a cultural rhythm that is structured, generous and deeply human.

Seen through unfamiliar eyes, the image lingers: dozens of men seated neatly on a mosque lawn, food carefully distributed before them, an endless murmur of conversation giving way to brief, collective stillness. What might appear at first glance to be a simple outdoor meal reveals itself as something more layered, not only kindness, but faith in practice.

Across Oman, night after night throughout Ramadhan, the carpets are laid out again. And as the sun sets, the same quiet anticipation returns.

FATWA

QUESTION & ANSWER

Shaikh
Dr Kahlan
Al Kharousi

Assistant Grand
Mufti of the
Sultanate
of Oman

QUESTION

In the month of Ramadhan, if someone fasts but does not perform Tarawih prayers, will his fast still be considered valid and accepted?

ANSWER

Tarawih is optional and does not affect the validity of the fast. However, performing Tarawih significantly increases rewards.

QURAN

VERSE OF THE DAY

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنٌ وَالْإِثْمُ وَالْبَغْيُ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“My Lord has only forbidden shocking deeds whether they are flagrant or kept hidden; and vice and oppression [on people] without any right to do so; and that you should associate anything with Allah (God) for which He has not sent down any authority; and that you should say something you do not know concerning Allah (God).”

[Surat al Araf] - Verse 33

HADITH

A GUIDE FOR THE FAITHFUL

Sahl bin Sa'd narrated that:
The Prophet (PBUH) said:

“There is a gate in Paradise called Ar-Raiyyan, those who fast shall be invited into it, and whoever was among those who fasted, then he will enter it; and whoever enters it, he will never thirst again.”

HEALTHY SLEEP AND ENERGY HABITS

MUAYYAD AL ABRI
Omani researcher and sports enthusiast

Getting dehydrated is a usual issue in Ramadhan, more so when it's hot. Make sure to drink plenty of water between Iftar and Suhoor, aiming for at least 8 glasses. Eating water-rich fruits and veggies can also help keep your hydration levels up. Try to stay away from drinks with caffeine since they can make you lose more water.

FEATURES



BEYOND THE IMAGE THE PURSUIT OF ESSENCE

MOHAMED AL BATTASHI

In an era where images compete loudly for attention, Omani photographer Ghaith al Battashi chooses a different path, one grounded in stillness and reflection. For him, photography has never been mere documentation; it is a fleeting moment granted a second life. His earliest memory of photography was the wonder of realising that an image could preserve time itself. From then on, he understood that photography is a silent language carrying emotion and memory beyond form.

Ghaith describes his style in three words: calm, human and honest. These qualities define a body of work that favours simplicity over spectacle and depth over distraction. His photographs often return to themes of stillness, beautiful solitude, and overlooked moments filled with quiet truth. Over the years, his artistic identity evolved from focusing on appearance to seeking meaning from chasing the perfect frame to uncovering the feeling beneath it.

Participation in competitions and artistic experiences, both locally and internationally, strengthened his confidence in his own vision, free from the pressure of market expectations. He takes particular pride in projects that tell sincere human stories, where emotional resonance matters more than visual impact. The most memorable feedback he ever received was simple yet profound: “Your photograph made me feel, even if I can’t explain why.” For him, that is the essence of success.

A typical creative day involves more observation than production. Good ideas, he believes, are born from attention. Technique is merely a tool, emotion guides every artistic decision. Before a shoot, he often walks and studies the light without a camera, listening to the space before attempting to capture it.

Oman is more than a backdrop to his work; it is an essential chapter in his artistic and personal growth. The coastline, mountain sunsets, and open landscapes where humanity meets nature have



GHAITH
AL BATTASHI

deeply influenced his perception of time and imagery. The country represents a meaningful phase that reshaped his relationship with both art and life.

Looking ahead, Ghaith hopes to leave behind honest work and a teaching experience that nurtures independence and confidence. He envisions his art becoming even simpler and more focused on essence in the coming years. His message to Omani artists and photographers is clear: do not rush results. Trust your sensitivity, and let art be an extension of your truth not a means to prove it.



ON SECOND THOUGHT

FIRST TIME IN OMAN DURING RAMADHAN? HERE ARE SOME IDEAS.



Yeru Ebuén
The writer is a luxury media strategist and a creative director

If this is your first time in Muscat during Ramadhan, you might make a common mistake. You might assume the city slows down. It does. But only during the day.

After sunset, Muscat rearranges itself. The fast breaks. The air cools. The streets, briefly quiet at maghrib, begin to fill again.

And if you are new here, the night is your invitation. The rhythm of the city changes in subtle ways. The stillness of the day gives way to a gentle hum, a quiet energy that is neither chaotic nor hurried. Muscat seems to stretch and breathe again, as if the day itself has been holding its breath.

Start simply. Accept an iftar invitation if one comes your way.

It may be at a family home, where warmth and hospitality are offered with effortless ease, or at a long hotel table where strangers quickly become companions. The meal is not only about food; it is about pace, about ritual, about presence. Dates first. Water. Soup. A gentle unfolding. Do not rush it. Let the conversation flow slowly, let the laughter linger, let the pause between bites be as meaningful as the meal itself.

What makes Ramadhan nights in Muscat distinctive is their balance. There is activity, but never excess. Restaurants extend into suhoor, cafés fill after Taraweeh prayers. Yet the atmosphere rarely tips into spectacle. Entertainment and devotion coexist, side by side, in harmony.

After prayers, step outside. Head to a night market, the kind that appears in parks and open grounds with lanterns strung above modest stalls. Walk slowly. Observe. Watch families moving in clusters, children skipping lightly along paths, older relatives walking together with quiet smiles. Notice how children are allowed to stay up far later than usual. Buy something small, perhaps a sweet or a cup of coffee. Sit for a moment on a bench. The point is not consumption. It is presence, a deliberate act of being, of witnessing life moving around you in harmony with the month. If you prefer something structured, check the

evening programmes at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre or the Royal Opera House. During Ramadhan, these spaces lean into spiritually themed concerts and community-focused gatherings. Even if you are not Muslim, they offer a respectful window into the tone of the month: reflective, immersive, yet never austere. Here, the music, the words, and the shared silence form part of the city’s nighttime pulse.

Then there is the coastline. A late walk along Qurum Beach or the marina at Al Mouj after 10pm will reveal another Muscat entirely. Groups chat on benches.

Young people take photographs beneath crescent decorations. Couples stroll hand in hand. The city feels unhurried, softened by the sound of gentle waves and the cooling night air. The energy is alive, yet calm, full of small moments that demand attention if you choose to see them.

What makes Ramadhan nights in Muscat distinct is their balance. There is activity, but not excess. Restaurants extend into suhoor. Cafés fill after Taraweeh prayers. Yet the atmosphere rarely tips into spectacle. The entertainment does not drown out the spirit of the month; it sits beside it, quietly enhancing it.

FOR A FIRST-TIME VISITOR, THAT BALANCE IS THE LESSON.

Ramadhan here is not a festival in the conventional sense. It is a rhythm. The day teaches restraint.

The night offers connection. Together, they reveal something essential about the city: its instinct for community, its ability to move gently yet decisively between reflection and celebration.

So if you arrive during this month, do not retreat to your hotel after iftar. Step into the night. Walk. Observe. Accept invitations. Listen to the quiet pulse of Muscat after sunset. Let the slower tempo guide you. Let the city, in all its nuanced motions, teach you the rhythm of Ramadhan.