

Edition

5

OMAN 2024: Growth Reimagined

VISION 2040: Oman's Blueprint for Resilience

# TAS ICONS



## ICONS OF LEADERSHIP 2024

TOP 10 TRAILBLAZERS SHAPING OMAN'S FUTURE

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SEPTEMBER 2025



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## A partner in progress to a nation on the move

On the occasion of **Oman's 54<sup>th</sup> National Day**, Khimji Ramdas Group and its Social Foundation, Eshraqa extend our heartfelt congratulations to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** and the people of Oman.

As Oman continues to flourish, we remain at the forefront, contributing to sustainable, future-focused initiatives that drive the progress and prosperity of the nation under Oman Vision 2040. Together, we are building a legacy of innovation and excellence.



نتقدم بثقة  
Moving Forward  
with Confidence





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# BETTER TOMORROW

## BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW, TODAY.

Congratulations to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik** and best wishes to the citizens of Oman on the 54th National Day.

As we commemorate our 54th National Day, we reflect on a journey marked by resilience, innovation, and unity. A journey that has transformed our nation into a beacon of hope and prosperity.

Under the wise and sagacious leadership of **His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik**, Oman is a true reflection of peace, tolerance, and harmony. His vision of driving innovation and fostering a business environment that thrives on creativity and collaboration has propelled this nation to great heights.

Together, we at Lulu Group envision a future where our nation stands tall as a global leader, a place where dreams take flight and aspirations soar.

Let us celebrate this momentous occasion fuelling its dreams, pride, progress and continue to build a brighter future for generations to come.





# The Road Ahead: A Unified Vision for Oman

His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has issued several visionary directives this past year, signalling a bold move towards enhancing Oman's economic, social, and industrial landscape.

**A**s Oman continues to embrace a transformative era under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, the nation finds itself at a pivotal juncture on the international stage. With a keen focus on economic growth, social welfare, and educational enhancement, His Majesty's directives are set to redefine the landscape of this beautiful Arabian Peninsula nation.

These initiatives, ranging from economic reforms to industrial innovation and social welfare, mark a significant leap in the Sultanate's journey towards fulfilling the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

## **Financial Stability and Economic Reforms**

The cornerstone of His Majesty's recent announcements is Oman's improved financial standing. The closing accounts for the fiscal year 2023 have shown a marked improvement in the country's financial health, resulting in a decline in public debt. This has positively impacted Oman's credit rating, a significant achievement that has gar-

nered commendation from His Majesty. This financial improvement signifies a brighter economic future and builds global confidence in Oman's markets.

In tandem with this, His Majesty emphasized the development of Oman's capital markets. A directive has been issued to launch an incentive programme to transform companies into joint-stock companies, encouraging them to list on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX). This initiative promises to boost the market value of the MSX, drawing in more foreign investments and offering companies a broader platform for growth.

## **A Promising Market for SMEs**

One of the most exciting aspects of His Majesty's directives is the establishment of a secondary market within the Muscat Stock Exchange, called the "Promising Companies Market." This new market will target private firms, family-owned businesses, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), offering them a platform for expansion and increased visibility. By converting

limited liability companies into closed joint-stock companies and incentivising their listing, Oman is setting the stage for its entrepreneurial landscape to flourish. This initiative is particularly beneficial for startups and SMEs, as it provides a bridge between private ownership and the public market, ultimately contributing to the diversification of Oman's economy. This market also stands as a testament to Oman's forward-thinking approach to boosting its local economy.

## **Industrial Strategy 2040: Powering Economic Diversification**

Oman's industrial sector plays a pivotal role in the country's vision for economic diversification, which is key to reducing the reliance on oil revenues. His Majesty approved the "Industrial Strategy 2040," which aims to establish Oman as a hub of industrial innovation. This strategy will enhance the quality of Omani industrial products and lay the foundation for modern, tech-driven infrastructure, which is crucial for supporting advanced industries.

**Progress isn't just economic — His Majesty's vision is about building a future of education, welfare, and unity; building a legacy that extends beyond borders and into a prosperous tomorrow.**

His Majesty's focus on industrial innovation is aligned with Oman Vision 2040, where industrial growth will be a major driver of economic prosperity. This forward-looking strategy ensures that Oman remains competitive in the global market while also creating opportunities for local industries to innovate and grow.

**Education, Leadership, and Social Development**

Oman's growth isn't just about industry and finance; education and leadership developments are also key pillars of His Majesty's vision.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has announced a RO 40 million fund for the education sector to build new schools and upgrade existing facilities. This initiative will provide a better learning environment for the

growing student population, ensuring that future generations are equipped with the skills necessary to lead Oman into a prosperous future.

In line with leadership development, His Majesty's directives extend to the Royal Academy of Management, which will roll out a series of strategic activities and programmes designed to cultivate leadership across various sectors. The Academy's "Future Leaders" programme directly reflects His Majesty's commitment to empowering the next generation of leaders who will navigate Oman through the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

**Enhancing Social Welfare: Waqf and Housing Support**

On the social front, His Majesty continues to prioritise the well-being of

Omani people. A new directive focuses on enhancing the endowment (Waqf) system in Oman, with the establishment of the Oman Endowment Foundation. This foundation will be responsible for investing endowment funds to ensure their sustainability, thereby supporting social causes and fostering a culture of compassion and collaboration.

Moreover, Oman's housing sector will receive a significant boost with an additional RO 70 million allocated to the residential assistance programme for 2024 and 2025. This fund will be used to purchase ready-made residences for eligible citizens, ensuring that Omani families have access to dignified housing that aligns with the country's development plans.

His Majesty's efforts in this regard clearly demonstrate his dedication to



## Oman's diplomatic efforts are further highlighted by its stance on peace and justice in the region, particularly about the ongoing conflicts in areas like the Gaza Strip.

providing a decent standard of living for all Omanis.

### Fostering International Relations

His Majesty's vision extends beyond Oman's borders. During his review of regional and international affairs, Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik reiterated Oman's commitment to fostering strong bilateral relationships with Arab and friendly countries. This includes deepening cooperation in ways that serve the mutual interests of all involved parties.

Oman's diplomatic efforts are further highlighted by its stance on peace and justice in the region, particularly

about the ongoing conflicts in areas like the Gaza Strip. His Majesty emphasized the importance of maintaining peaceful relations and ensuring that Oman continues to play a constructive role in international diplomacy.

### Incentivising Investments and Expanding Opportunities

His Majesty's directives also include critical measures aimed at boosting foreign and local investments in Oman.

A key component of this strategy is the elimination of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) on dividends and inter-

est for non-residents, which is expected to attract more foreign investors to Oman's capital markets.

Furthermore, His Majesty has increased the Oman Development Bank's (ODB) maximum lending limit from RO 1 million to RO 5 million, providing additional support for development projects that contribute to Oman's economic value.

This move is designed to encourage larger-scale investments in vital sectors, particularly those outside the capital of Muscat, which will help promote balanced regional development.

### The Road Ahead

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's directives reflect a holistic approach to governance—balancing economic growth, social welfare, and leadership development. These initiatives are not just about immediate gains but are part of a long-term vision to position Oman as a global player, ready to confidently embrace the future.



# Icons of Leadership

## 10

### Trailblazers Shaping Oman's Future



I envision a more inclusive society  
**- Her Highness Sayyida Hujaija Jaifer Al Said**

- What makes a leader stand out?
- What sets them apart in today's highly competitive world?
- What is that unique quality that inspires others to follow their lead or, better yet, to realize their own potential?



Innovative investments drive economic growth  
**- Siham Al Harthy**



My focus is on transformative growth  
**- Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani**



We have tools to deliver Oman's vision  
**- Majid Al Amri**



The most important thing is to keep learning  
**- Ahmad Al Harthy**



Community work contributes to building society  
**- Hilal Al Sarmi**



Oman's media represents society  
**- Khalid Al Zadjali**

#### 'The Arabian Stories' Icons have the answer.

The chosen ten individuals embody the values of hard work and perseverance, shaping the present and paving the way for a future that is inclusive, sustainable and rooted in national pride. Read on for brief insights into the stories of leadership and excellence that the in-depth profiles of these ten Icons reveal.



Educators should stay curious and open to new ideas  
**- Dr Said Al Kittani**



Omani youth are most climate-conscious in the region  
**- Rumaitha Al Busaidi**



My picture is in everyone's pocket in Oman  
**- Haitham Al Farsi**

# A Beacon of Hope for Oman's Disability Community

In the field of disability advocacy in Oman, Her Highness Sayyida Hujaija Jaifer Al Said stands out as a dedicated leader whose untiring efforts not only highlight the importance of inclusivity but also align seamlessly with Oman's Vision 2040 goals.

“

The focus on issues related to people with disabilities often arises from a desire to promote inclusivity, equality, and accessibility. Advocating for this community is essential because it addresses systemic barriers and challenges that individuals with disabilities face in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and social participation

”



Sayyida Hujaija Jaifer Al Said

**H**er Highness Sayyida Hujaija bint Jaifer Al Said stands as a formidable figure in the realm of social responsibility, particularly for individuals with disabilities in Oman. As the Chairperson of the Association for the Welfare of Handicapped Children and an International Ambassador for Social Responsibility, she has dedicated over two decades to advocacy, raising awareness, and creating opportunities for the disabled community. Her journey, marked by passion and resilience, has not only transformed lives but has also inspired countless others to join the cause.

### A Journey Rooted in Compassion

Her Highness Hujaija's journey towards social responsibility began long before her leadership roles. Graduating from Shati Al Qurum School in 1995, she pursued a Bachelor's degree in Economics with a minor in Psychology from the American University in Cairo, graduating in 2001.

Her professional path in entrepreneurship commenced in 2008, but her advocacy work started much earlier, during her university years, when she joined a student union group called Hand in Hand. This group focused on supporting individuals with disabilities, orphans, and other vulnerable communities. Recalling those early years, she states: "After spending a few years away, I returned to Oman, and shortly after, my mother passed away. As a Muslim, I chose to dedicate my efforts to advocating for people with disabilities as a way to honour my mother, a practice we refer to in Arabic as Sadaqa Jariya."

Attributing her passion for community service and the desire for improving others' lives through decisive changes and constructive assistance, to her forte for entrepreneurship, she notes, "I strive to implement projects and initiatives that contribute to achieving social sustainability and empowering those in need."

### Success Stories That Inspire

One of the most notable impacts of H.H. Hujaija's work is the increased independence experienced by many individuals with disabilities. Through legislative advocacy and community support, numerous individuals have found meaningful employment and have gained access to public services that were once unavailable to them.



It is these personal stories of individuals who have found meaningful employment, achieved educational goals, or engaged in community activities that highlight the impact of such legislation and advocacy efforts.

### Navigating Challenges with Resilience

Despite the successes, H.H. Hujaija has faced significant challenges in her role as a leader and advocate. One of the primary obstacles has been securing funding for disability initiatives. "Nevertheless, I have successfully navigated this obstacle by relying on my faith in God and utilising my broad network, which enabled me to garner assistance from both the private and public sectors in Oman," she stresses.

### Core Values Driving Advocacy

H.H. Hujaija's work is grounded in core values that guide her leadership and advocacy efforts. She lists them as follows:

- 1. Integrity:** Upholding honesty and transparency in all actions and decisions.
- 2. Empathy:** Understanding and valuing the perspectives and experiences of others.
- 3. Inclusivity:** Promoting diversity and ensuring all voices are heard and represented.
- 4. Collaboration:** Working together

er with others to achieve common goals and foster a sense of community.

- 5. Respect:** Valuing the dignity and rights of all individuals, fostering a supportive environment.

"These values help create a foundation for effective leadership and meaningful advocacy," she adds.

### A Vision for the Future

H.H. Hujaija envisions a future where social responsibility towards people with disabilities is deeply embedded in society. Key elements of this vision include:

- 1. Accessibility:** Public spaces and services designed to accommodate everyone, ensuring that people with disabilities can participate fully in society.
- 2. Education and Awareness:** Increased emphasis on educating communities about disabilities, fostering empathy, and dismantling stereotypes.
- 3. Employment Opportunities:** Companies will implement inclusive hiring practices and provide necessary accommodations, leading to increased employment rates.
- 4. Advocacy and Representation:** People with disabilities will have a stronger voice in decision-making processes, leading to policies and initiatives that reflect their needs and experiences.

One of the most notable impacts of H.H. Hujaija's work is the increased independence experienced by many individuals with disabilities. Through legislative advocacy and community support, numerous individuals have found meaningful employment and have gained access to public services.

### 5. Technology and Innovation:

Advances in technology will enhance accessibility, offering new tools and solutions that empower individuals with disabilities.

- 6. Community Support:** There will be a focus on building supportive communities that encourage social interaction and collaboration among people with and without disabilities, promoting a sense of belonging.

### 7. Mental Health Resources:

Recognising the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, there will be an increased focus on mental health resources and support systems tailored to their needs.

"By prioritising these aspects, society can move toward a more inclusive future where people with disabilities are recognised for their capabilities and contributions, ultimately enriching the community as a whole," she states.

### Upcoming Initiatives

Among her various initiatives, H.H. Hujaija is particularly excited about the "Village of Happiness" carnival, designed to provide a safe and joyful space for individuals with disabilities. This vibrant event includes rides, performances, and activities catering to diverse interests, ensuring a memorable experience for all attendees.

Additionally, she organises two vendor events known as "Takatuf" each year. These events provide a unique platform for a diverse range of individuals and entities, including organisations, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), large corporations, entrepreneurs, artists, and craftsmen. They are given the opportunity to showcase their brands and exhibit their products to a wide audience.

Explaining about the event, she states: "One of our flagship offerings is a comprehensive workshop designed to enhance participants' marketing

and business management skills. This workshop, endorsed by the Ministry of Higher Education, aims to equip business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs with practical strategies and insights necessary for success in today's competitive landscape... Upon successful completion of the workshop, attendees are awarded certificates, which not only recognises their commitment to professional development but also enhances their credibility in the business community."

### Advice for Aspiring Leaders

For young leaders looking to make a difference, H.H. Hujaija offers several key pieces of advice:

- 1. Build Relationships:** Foster connections with diverse groups and individuals to amplify impact and bring new perspectives.
- 2. Be Open to Learning:** Embrace feedback and adapt your approach as needed.
- 3. Set Clear Goals:** Define specific, achievable objectives to maintain focus and measure your progress.

**3. Stay Resilient:** Challenges will arise, but persistence is crucial; learn from setbacks and keep pushing forward.

**4. Communicate Effectively:** Share your vision and progress with your community. Transparency builds trust and encourages engagement.

### Balancing Public and Personal Life

Juggling her role as a public figure, advocate and a philanthropist with personal life is no small feat. H.H. Hujaija emphasises the importance of time management and structured schedules to balance her commitments – both public duties and personal activities. "This helps ensure that neither area is neglected," she adds.

She also finds solace in reading the Quran, specifically Surah Al-Baqarah, early each morning, which, as she notes, "helps protect the person who recites it and also brings immense barakah into one's day."

### A Lasting Legacy

As she reflects on her journey, H.H. Hujaija hopes to leave a legacy centred on inclusivity, empowerment, and awareness.

"I envision a world where individuals with disabilities are not only accepted but celebrated for their unique contributions. I hope that when I am gone, people will remember the positive contributions I made to society and will keep me in their prayers," she concludes.



# Shaping Oman's Future through Leadership and Innovation

In the fast-evolving landscape of Oman's business and investment sector, Siham Al Harthy stands out as a visionary leader dedicated to fostering economic growth and sustainable development in line with Oman's Vision 2040 goals.

“

Leading Siham Development and Investment has reinforced the importance of strategic foresight, adaptability, and innovation in decision-making. I've learned that leadership is not just about managing resources but about inspiring teams to align with a shared vision. This experience has taught me to weigh short-term gains against long-term goals, always with a focus on sustainability and growth.

”



Siham Ahmed Yousif Al Harthy



**A**s the CEO and Founder of Siham Development and Investment and a Board Member of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), Siham Al Harthy brings over 20 years of experience in both the public and private sectors. Her academic credentials, including an MPhil, a Doctorate in Business Administration, and an MBA with honors, equip her to lead large-scale development projects that align with Oman's long-term economic objectives.

"At Siham Development, we focus on creating sustainable solutions that drive economic growth," she explains. In her role as a Board Member of OCCI, Al Harthy also influences business policies and advocates for an inclusive economy, ensuring that businesses in Oman have the support to innovate and grow.

#### **A Commitment to Development**

Al Harthy's passion for development is deeply rooted in her commitment

to Oman's economic progress. "Investment in infrastructure, real estate, and human capital can transform economies," she emphasises.

Her background in agronomy offers her a unique perspective on sustainable development, bridging diverse fields to create long-lasting impact in Oman. A notable example is her involvement in real estate projects that not only stimulate local investment but also create jobs and promote sustainable practices. "My agronomy background gave me a unique perspective on sustainable development, and this blend of fields fuels my desire to create impactful change in Oman," she notes.

Under her leadership, Siham Development has pioneered innovative projects that contribute to economic diversification, in line with the national priorities outlined in Vision 2040. From renewable energy initiatives to real estate projects designed to maximize sustainability, her approach ensures that both local and regional goals are met.

#### **Leadership and Decision-Making**

Leading Siham Development has profoundly shaped Al Harthy's approach to leadership and decision-making. "Strategic foresight, adaptability, and innovation are crucial in today's dynamic environment," she asserts.

An example of her forward-thinking leadership can be seen in her decision to invest in green energy technologies, positioning Siham Development as a leader in sustainable solutions. She views leadership not merely as resource management but as an endeavor to inspire teams to unite under a shared vision. "I've learned to weigh short-term gains against long-term goals, always prioritizing sustainability," she explains, underscoring her commitment to responsible growth.

#### **Navigating Challenges and Opportunities**

Al Harthy acknowledges the challenges posed by Oman's current economic environment, particularly the need to

diversify beyond oil. Yet, she sees this as an opportunity: "There is tremendous potential in sectors like tourism, logistics, and renewable energy," she affirms.

Through her role at OCCI, she actively supports policies that foster innovation and create opportunities for SMEs, which are key to Oman's long-term economic success. "The OCCI is focused on enhancing business-friendly policies and supporting SMEs, which are crucial for job creation and fostering innovation," she explains.

#### **Balancing Dual Roles**

Balancing her responsibilities as CEO of Siham Development and a Board Member at OCCI requires meticulous management, a skill Al Harthy has mastered. "Balance is key in managing both roles," she explains. By relying on a strong team at Siham Development, she is able to delegate effectively, allowing her to focus on strategic oversight.

Her role on the OCCI board requires participation in policymaking, where she ensures that both her roles complement each other, always with a focus on Oman's overall economic development.

#### **Empowering Women in Leadership**

Al Harthy is proud to witness the evolving role of women in Oman's business sector. "Women are playing an increasingly pivotal role, and I am proud to be part of this wave," she stresses. As a mentor to aspiring female leaders, she emphasizes the importance of resilience, determination, and building a strong network of mentors and allies. "Resilience and determination are key, as is building a strong network of mentors and allies who can support you on your journey," she advises. Through her leadership at Siham Development, she ensures that women in her company are provided with growth opportunities and leadership roles.

#### **Challenges and Progress**

While challenges such as societal expectations and biases remain, Al Harthy is optimistic about the progress being made in promoting gender equality in Oman. "Oman has made great strides in promoting gender equality; women today have access to resources and platforms for leader-

ship," she observes.

However, she stresses the importance of ensuring equal representation at all levels of decision-making. Through her work at OCCI and Siham Development, she continues to advocate for inclusive practices that ensure women have a seat at the table in shaping Oman's future.

#### **Vision for the Future**

Looking ahead, Al Harthy envisions Siham Development playing a leading role in Oman's development and investment sectors. "My vision is to continue growing Siham Development with a focus on sustainable projects that have both local and regional impact," she shares. A key focus of her future strategy includes diversifying the company's portfolio into areas such as green energy and smart cities, aligning with Oman's Vision 2040 goals. "We're looking at smart investments in these areas to drive the future of Oman's economy," she adds.

#### **A Message of Perseverance**

For those inspired by her journey, Al Harthy has a clear message: "Believe in your vision and never underestimate the power of perseverance." She emphasizes that success is not just about seizing opportunities but about having the tenacity to overcome challenges. "Surround yourself with the right people, be open to learning, and stay true to your values," she advises, highlighting the importance of integrity in leadership.

#### **Legacy of Inclusion and Innovation**

As a leader, Al Harthy hopes to leave a legacy defined by innovation, inclusion, and sustainability. "My aim has always been to contribute meaningfully to Oman's economic and social fabric, particularly in empowering the next generation of leaders. I want to be remembered as someone who helped pave the way for others, especially women, to take their rightful place in shaping Oman's future."

Through her work, Siham Al Harthy exemplifies the spirit of innovation and leadership in Oman, inspiring a new generation of leaders. With a visionary approach and a strong emphasis on ethical leadership, she continues to guide future entrepreneurs in the country.



Under her leadership, Siham Development has pioneered innovative projects that contribute to economic diversification. From renewable energy initiatives to real estate projects designed to maximize sustainability, her approach ensures that both local and regional goals are met.

# From Vision to Reality

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Known for his visionary leadership and commitment to excellence, Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, the dynamic CEO of ACERE, is shaping the future of Oman's industrial ecosystem in harmony with the nation's broader goals of economic transformation and sustainability.

“

At MHD ACERE, we're fully embracing the shift towards electric vehicles and sustainability initiatives. I've established a dedicated Renewable Energy and EV Chargers Division and partnered with ABB to bring high-power EV chargers to Oman, ensuring we're at the forefront of e-mobility.

”



Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani



**M**ohsin Hani Al Bahrani, the visionary CEO of Automotive, Construction Equipment, and Renewable Energy (ACERE) at MHD Group, has been instrumental in shaping Oman's business landscape. With a deep-rooted commitment to the nation's progress, Mohsin has led MHD ACERE to unprecedented heights, expanding its operations and introducing groundbreaking initiatives.

#### Early Influences and Educational Foundations

Rooted in family values and educational achievements, Mohsin's journey underscores a commitment to societal progress intertwined with business success. Reflecting on the early influences that shaped his career and led him to his current role, he states, "My grandfather was a visionary entrepreneur who understood that business success should be aligned with societal progress. Even when he founded MHD over fifty years ago, he envisioned the company's growth as intertwined with Oman's development. Growing up, I was constantly inspired by his passion, not just for business but for contributing to the nation's progress. That philosophy has stayed with me throughout my journey."

Explaining further, he adds: "As the eldest grandson, I felt a responsibility to carry forward his legacy of leader-

ship and innovation. My educational path—earning a business management degree from Brunel University London and a Master's in Middle Eastern Studies from King's College London—gave me the tools to understand both the global business landscape and the unique dynamics of the Middle East. This academic foundation, coupled with the values instilled by my grandfather, has shaped my approach to leadership."

At MHD ACERE, Mohsin is focused on transformative growth. Accentuating that growth, he states, "As we expand, we remain aligned with Oman's development. It's a delicate balance of pushing boundaries while staying true to the vision of contributing to the socio-economic progress of the country—a principle my grandfather always stood for."

#### Key Milestones in Leadership

Mohsin's tenure has been marked by innovation and adaptability, particularly during unprecedented times. Sharing pivotal moments that shaped his leadership style and approach to navigating challenges in the automotive industry, he says, "A key milestone in my career was stepping into the role of CEO during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was personally humbling and transformative. I quickly recognised the need for innovation, merging several verticals to optimize operations and shifting

all customer communications to digital platforms. This approach not only ensured business continuity but also enhanced customer engagement."

Another significant moment, as he notes, was launching e-commerce for brands like Jaguar, Land Rover, and MG Motors, thereby simplifying the car-buying process.

Besides, bringing companies like Longi, Fronius, Luminous, ABB EV Chargers and Weir Trio to Oman reflected his commitment to both sustainability and contributing to the nation's development.

"Additionally, by integrating the Tires and Batteries, and offering a one-stop solution for automotive needs, we have strengthened our market position and enhanced customer satisfaction, positioning MHD ACERE as a leader in the automotive industry in Oman," he notes.

#### Shaping Leadership and Decision-Making

As the CEO of ACERE, Mohsin has navigated a multifaceted landscape, which has significantly influenced his approach to leadership and decision-making. Highlighting the same, he states, "Leading diverse sectors like automotive, construction, and renewable energy, I've learned the importance of combining strategic foresight with innovation. Initiatives like launching MHD Leasing LLC and the establishment of HospiCare,

which introduced cutting-edge surgical equipment and advanced health-care communication systems, reflect my commitment to advancing Oman's socio-economic development. This journey has taught me to make decisions that not only grow the business but also contribute to the long-term prosperity of the region."

#### Growth and Future Vision

Under his visionary leadership, MHD ACERE has witnessed remarkable growth in its sales and after-sales network across Oman. Emphasising the significance of expanding both, he notes, "We've doubled the number of aftersales areas and added new sales locations, all while maintaining a strong focus on customer satisfaction, which earned us the Best Customer Satisfaction Award for MG Motors in the Middle East in 2023. We now have 15 service centers nationwide, reflecting our commitment to hassle-free, high-quality service. Looking ahead, my goal is to continue expanding MG's aftersales network, ensuring our customers receive timely, professional service backed by the latest technology."

#### Commitment to Oman's Progress

In the competitive landscape of the Middle Eastern automotive industry, MHD ACERE stands out for its deep-rooted commitment to the welfare of Oman. Underlining ACERE's distinct advantage over other automotive conglomerates in the region, Mohsin explains, "Since its founding, MHD's growth has been intrinsically linked to the nation's progress. We've always aligned our development with Oman's journey, from the era of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos to the new renaissance under His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik. For me, it was only natural to contribute to this path by introducing iconic brands and pioneering initiatives that not only elevate our business but also create jobs and contribute to Oman's socio-economic development."

#### Navigating Challenges and Opportunities

Addressing the complexities facing large conglomerates in the region, Mohsin provides the following perspective: "As the head of a large conglomerate, I see both challenges and opportunities in Oman's business



“  
A key milestone in my career was stepping into the role of CEO during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. I quickly recognised the need for innovation, merging several verticals to optimize operations and shifting all customer communications to digital platforms.”

landscape. One key challenge is navigating fierce competition, especially in the automotive sector, where global players dominate. Securing investments for new business lines, like our renewable energy division, and balancing sustainability with profitability are also significant hurdles. However, there are great opportunities too, such as penetrating untapped markets, scaling operations, and expanding our reach. By focusing on adaptability, resilience, and strategic thinking, we've been able to overcome these obstacles and drive sustainable growth for MHD."

#### Embracing Sustainability

Pointing out that MHD ACERE is actively responding to the evolving landscape of the automotive industry, particularly in the realm of electric

vehicles (EVs) and sustainability initiatives, Mohsin provides insights into the company's strategic approach. He notes: "At MHD ACERE, we're fully embracing the shift towards electric vehicles and sustainability initiatives. I've established a dedicated Renewable Energy and EV Chargers Division and partnered with ABB to bring high-power EV chargers to Oman, ensuring we're at the forefront of e-mobility. Our car brands are also adapting, with the introduction of electric models like the MG Cyberster and Hongqi E-HS9, alongside hybrid versions from Land Rover. We're committed to being pioneers in offering green, sustainable solutions as the demand for electric vehicles grows."

#### Evolving Leadership Style

Reflecting on his leadership style and its evolution in response to a rapidly changing business landscape, he points out that it is rooted in adaptability and resilience, especially when managing growth and scalability in a dynamic market.

"Over time, I've focused on operational efficiency and strategic adaptation to navigate challenges. Establishing MHD's Renewable Energy Division is a testament to my leadership approach, which balances innovation with environmental responsibility. This initiative reflects my commitment to sustainability and my vision to contribute to Oman's eco-friendly transformation. As a leader, I've learned to evolve by staying forward-thinking and driving change that aligns with long-term goals," he affirms.

#### Legacy and Future Aspirations

"As a leader, I hope to leave a legacy that reflects both business success and a commitment to the larger societal good," states Mohsin, adding that he draws inspiration from his grandfather, who believed in linking MHD's growth to the development of Oman.

"I believe that a business's success holds no true value if it doesn't contribute to national development. My aim is to continue this vision by fostering innovation, sustainability, and empathy in everything we do. I want to be remembered not just for expanding MHD, but for helping transform Oman's business landscape in a way that benefits the country and its people for generations to come," he asserts.

# The Making of Thawani Pay

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Inspired by the limitless possibilities of computers, emerging technologies and advanced software platforms, Majid Al Amri, the pioneering founder and CEO of Thawani Pay, continues to lead innovation in Oman, collaborating with industry leaders and promoting SMEs.

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Even if your product is great, innovation is amazing and you have developed a robust application or system, you have to make sure that the market is ready and there is financial feasibility. Because, at the end of this whole game, investors will not come in unless there is a return on their investment.

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Majid Al Amri



It may be hard to imagine now, but over a decade ago, the concept of mobile payments in Oman was almost unheard of. Yet, Majid Al Amri, Founder and CEO of Thawani Pay, saw a gap in the market long before it became a global trend. Reflecting on the early days, Amri recalls the spark that set his entrepreneurial journey in motion.

Having graduated as a computer engineer from Sultan Qaboos University in 2003, he imbibed technology in every facet of his daily life and ventured into the world of start-ups, establishing few businesses that acted as precursors to his dream - Thawani.

"In 2013, when I was working in the oil and gas sector, I was heavily involved in international travel. It was during these travels that I started noticing a global shift towards digital payments. I was initially focused on e-commerce, inspired by platforms like eBay, but soon realised that the online payments space was a much bigger opportunity," Amri states.

#### Overcoming Rejections

Starting a tech company in 2014 wasn't easy, especially in a country where digital payments were still a foreign concept. Amri faced numerous rejections from investors and stakeholders who were sceptical

about the potential of digital payments. However, his unwavering belief in the concept and his relentless pursuit of his vision kept him going.

"When I first pitched the idea, I faced a lot of rejection. Investors weren't convinced - after all, the market wasn't ready for online payments back then," Amri admits.

It was a challenging time for him. There were moments when he almost gave up on the idea. "I remember thinking that maybe I wasn't cut out for this. But each time I decided to walk away, I would reflect on what went wrong and try again," he muses, crediting a network of mentors and advisors who provided critical feedback during this tough period. "I realised that my passion alone wasn't enough. The ecosystem, the stakeholders, the market - everything needed to align for the idea to work," he adds.

#### Driving Change in a Traditional Market

Reflecting on all the tough times he had to endure, Amri speaks with quiet confidence: "It's the belief that this will work, combined with the knowledge that if it worked in other parts of the world, it can work here too."

Pointing out the international trends he observed during his travels, he states: "I would see mobile pay-

ments gaining traction in countries like the UK and the US, and I thought, why not Oman? If it works there, it should work here. I knew that despite the challenges, this was a journey worth pursuing."

Amri also emphasises the importance of staying adaptable. "The biggest factor in ensuring sustainability is continuous innovation. Without it, we would have been left behind. Even now, we are constantly scanning the market and tweaking our business model to stay relevant."

This mindset of innovation is what enabled Thawani to not only survive but thrive. In fact, he points out that Thawani's decision to embrace global trends like Apple Pay and Samsung Pay, even though it wasn't initially part of the plan, was a major turning point for the company.

By 2015, his efforts paid off. He secured his first investor and launched Thawani Pay in 2016 as an Omani company specialized in providing innovative payment solutions based on financial technology.

#### Thawani Technologies

Since 2016, Thawani has been providing innovative e-payment solutions to facilitate payment transactions, and enhance users' experience, making it faster and more secure. In 2020, it became the first non-banking finan-

Reflecting on all the tough times he had to endure, Amri speaks with quiet confidence: "It's the belief that this will work, combined with the knowledge that if it worked in other parts of the world, it can work here too."

cial entity to be licensed by the Central Bank of Oman for payment services. With its focus on introducing unique payment solutions, the company also tailored various payment options for merchants and individuals, such as bill payments, recharging electricity accounts, paying educational fees, government services and donations to charities.

Not surprisingly, in 2022 Amri's initiatives earned him regional recognition with the Sheikh Salem Al Ali Al Sabah Informatics Award; he bagged the 21st edition of the award's category of 'Excellence in Developing Smart Financial Solutions'.

While this accomplishment caps Amri's tenure as a founder and leader of the first financial technologies firm of its kind in Oman, the recent inclusion of Thawani Technologies in the Forbes Middle East Fintech 50 list, underscores its continuing success - locally, regionally and globally.

#### Changing Ecosystem

Looking at Oman's entrepreneurial landscape today, Amri is optimistic about the future. "When I started, there were very few resources available for entrepreneurs. Investors were almost non-existent, and getting a license was a huge challenge," he reflects. "Now, the whole ecosystem has changed. We have government entities that actively support start-ups, like the Promising Start-ups Programme, Oman Future Fund, and a regulatory environment that is much more conducive to innovation," he lists.

According to him, access to capital is no longer the biggest hurdle for start-ups today.

"Money is not an issue anymore. Investors are now much more open to funding technology start-ups because they see successful stories unfolding right here in Oman and across the region. We now have incubators, accelerators, and consultants who provide critical advice. These resources are invaluable, especially when starting out," he explains.

#### The Future of Thawani Pay

Looking ahead, Amri remains committed to Thawani's mission of driving innovation in the payments sector. He points to Thawani's unexpected success in the card payments business as an example of the importance of adaptability. "We never planned to offer cards, but when we saw the global rise of mobile wallets like Apple Pay and Samsung Pay, we realised that we needed to pivot. Today, we are one of the leading players in the market, offering cards and digital payments solutions," he notes.

As the business continues to grow, Amri is focused on what's next. "We are always scanning the market to understand new trends. Our mission is to stay ahead of the curve and to continue providing our customers with innovative solutions that make their lives easier."

He is also hopeful for Oman's start-up scene. "When I started, there were only a handful of start-ups in Oman. Now, I see hundreds of new ventures. I am confident that one of them will become a unicorn in the next few years. And I hope Thawani is one of those companies that helps to pave



the way for the next generation of entrepreneurs," he points out.

#### Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

For those looking to follow in Amri's footsteps, his advice is simple but powerful: "Start small. Focus on building a product that meets an immediate need. Prove that it works, then scale. Don't rush into your big dream right away."

He also advises new entrepreneurs to tap into the wealth of resources available today: "Use the tools and support systems around you—accelerators, mentors, and networks. Don't go it alone. Learn from others who have walked this path before."



# Racing Against the Odds

When you think of speed, determination, and the heart-pounding thrill of racing, few names resonate as deeply in Oman's motorsport scene as Ahmad Al Harthy.

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True victory isn't just crossing the finish line—it's the years of resilience, sacrifice, and grit that got you there, and proving that with every race is a rush worth every mile chased.

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Ahmad Al Harthy



A journey that began with a childhood passion for go-karting has transformed into a racing career filled with victories, podium finishes, and dreams realized on the global stage. From humble beginnings in Oman's karting circuits to rubbing shoulders with motorsport legends like Valentino Rossi, Ahmad Al Harthy's story is nothing short of inspiring.

#### From Karts to Cars

Ahmad Al Harthy's passion for motorsports began at the tender age of seven, thanks to a casual visit with his older brother to a local go-kart track in Oman. Although karting was a fun hobby at first, it planted the seeds of ambition in young Ahmad's heart. Little did he know that these early races would set the stage for a future filled with roaring engines, podium finishes, and the relentless pursuit of speed.

As Al Harthy grew, so did his love for motorsport, but it wasn't until his early 20s that the dream of professional racing truly began to take shape. After finishing his secondary education, Ahmad moved to the United Kingdom to pursue a degree in finance and accounting—a path far removed from the race tracks he loved. However, destiny had other plans. A friend's invitation to participate in a 24-hour go-kart race in Oman reignited the fire within him.

#### Shifting Gears into Formula Racing

In 2006, Ahmad Al Harthy took the

leap from karts to cars, marking his debut in professional racing with the Thunder Arabia Middle East Championship in Bahrain. As the first Omani-born driver to compete in formula racing, he was blazing a trail for future generations of Omani racers. Al Harthy didn't just participate—he dominated, finishing the season as Vice-Champion with two race wins and ten podiums from 14 races.

But Al Harthy wasn't satisfied with just breaking new ground in the Middle East. His ambition drove him to seek tougher competition, leading him to the UK's Formula Renault BARC Championship the following year.

#### The Road Less Travelled

Competing in the UK was a whole new challenge for Ahmad. The competition was fierce, and resources were limited. With a small team of volunteers and a shoestring budget, Al Harthy had to work harder than ever.

Those three years were extremely tough, as he admits, it wasn't just about racing; he had to manage the team's finances, secure sponsors, and make sure everything was in place.

Despite the difficulties, Al Harthy's persistence paid off.

By 2009, he had finished second in the Formula Renault BARC Championship, proving that he could hold his own against some of the best drivers in the world. But more importantly, these years taught him valuable lessons about resilience, perseverance, and the importance of support on and off the track.

#### Back Home and Onward

Al Harthy's success did not go unnoticed. Back in Oman, both the Ministry of Sports Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism began to see the potential in supporting homegrown motorsport talent. He shared that it was an incredible feeling to have his country backing him and said that he wasn't just racing for himself anymore but was representing Oman.

With this newfound support, Ahmad set his sights on even bigger goals. In 2010, he joined Oman Air/Redline Racing and competed in the prestigious Porsche Carrera Cup GB Championship. It was here that he truly began to shine on the international stage, finishing third overall in the Pro-Am 1 Class in 2011. However, perhaps the most significant moment of his career came that same year when he became the first Omani to compete at the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans. He mentioned that being part of such a historic race was humbling, especially during the 40th anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said's reign.

#### Taking the Wheel in 2024

Fast forward to 2024, and Ahmad Al Harthy is once again making headlines. This time, he's driving for Team WRT and BMW in the FIA World Endurance Championship and the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup. Partnering with global racing icon Valentino Rossi and professional BMW factory driver Maxime Martin, Al Harthy is part of a dream team.

Cruising to what already has been

a stellar career, Harthy made history by winning the podium at the iconic Italian track Monza in the fourth season race of the Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup.

For the first time in the race series' history, a car not competing in the Pro class clinched the overall victory. Ahmad and his Oman Racing, powered by OQ teammates Sam De Haan and Jens Klingmann, cruised to victory in their BMW M4 at the end of the three-hour race.

"Words can't fully capture what happened in Monza. We made history by securing P1 in the overall classification. Something like this had never happened with a bronze entry car in endurance racing," he said.

Al Harthy's new role as a Brand Ambassador for BMW Oman adds another layer to his growing list of accomplishments. With the support of prestigious sponsors, including OQ, Omantel, and the Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Al Harthy has everything he needs to make 2024 a landmark year in his career.

#### On and Off the Track

While Ahmad Al Harthy continues to push the limits on the track, he's equally committed to giving back off the track. One of his biggest pas-

sions is road safety, and he frequently speaks about the importance of responsible driving. He says it's never safe to speed on the streets and stresses that motorsport has taught him the value of discipline and safety, which he wants to pass on to the younger generation.

Reflecting on his journey so far, he said, "You cannot go behind success. Success comes with a lot of sacrifices. You need to be patient and wait for that moment of glory. To reach this stage was not easy. It took several years of hard work and time. Your ultimate success is the time and effort you put in your work."

Through his achievements, he has shown that a career in racing is not only possible for Omanis but can also be incredibly rewarding.

#### The Final Lap: Looking Ahead

"Watching the Omani flag fly high and hearing our national anthem, this is why we race."

As Ahmad Al Harthy gears up for the rest of the 2024 season, he remains focused on one thing—improvement. For Al Harthy, success in motorsport is about more than just talent behind the wheel—it's about having the right support, making wise investments of time and effort, and always striving

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Success in motorsport, like in life, is a test of patience, perseverance, and the power to keep going when the road gets tough.

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to improve. Ahmad Al Harthy's journey from Oman to the world's most prestigious racing circuits is a testament to the power of passion, perseverance, and an unwavering belief in one's dreams. From a seven-year-old karting enthusiast to a seasoned professional racer is a story of dedication, perseverance, and national pride. His success on the track is matched only by his commitment to giving back to his country, making him not only a champion in motorsport but a role model for young Omanis.



# A Vision for Community Health

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In the domain of public health and community service in Oman, few figures stand out as prominently as Hilal bin Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sarmi.

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I believe that community work contributes to building society and improving the quality of life, and this motivates me to double my efforts and adopt many charitable community initiatives. It also plays a role in strengthening community cohesion and reinforcing its bonds.

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Hilal bin Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sarmi



As the Executive Director of the Health Endowment Foundation (Athar), he is at the forefront of enhancing healthcare delivery and promoting a culture of volunteerism in the Sultanate. With a distinguished career that spans multiple roles in health inspection, diplomacy, and governance, Al Sarmi's insights provide a rich perspective on leadership and community development.

#### A Foundation in Health

Al Sarmi graduated from the Institute of Public Health in 1997, launching a career dedicated to improving health services in Oman. He began as a health inspector with the Ministry of Health and quickly ascended through various supervisory positions. In 2010, he took a significant leap into international diplomacy, serving as a health attaché at the Sultanate's Embassy in London for three years. Upon returning, he took on the role of the director at the Office of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Health Affairs until 2015.

His political engagement further deepened when he was elected as a member of the Shura Council, representing the Wilayat of Seeb until 2023. Now, as Executive Director of Athar, his focus is on securing funding sources to implement the Foundation's projects and support healthcare sector across Oman.

#### Leadership Through Engagement

Reflecting on his time as a member of

the Shura Council, Al Sarmi describes it as a platform that helps establish connection with the community. "The Shura Council is considered a platform for every leader, due to the connection and follow-up on many matters related to the community, such as projects, budgets, government sector plans, and much more," he explains, pointing out that the membership provides one with the right environment to refine both managerial and cognitive skills.

His experience in governance and policy-making has profoundly shaped his approach to leadership, enabling him to navigate the complexities of community health and development effectively.

#### Athar's Mission in the Community

As the Executive Director of the Foundation, Al Sarmi stands as a pillar of hope through his support for youth and family projects and his passion for volunteerism. Having played pivotal roles as a founder of several charitable associations and organisations, he firmly believes in the power of community engagements in carving conducive environments for people from all walks of life.

It is pertinent to note that the Health Endowment Foundation - Athar - plays a pivotal role in Oman's healthcare landscape, focusing on charitable works that address pressing health needs.

Attributing his ongoing community initiatives and outreach programmes to his passion and love for volunteer

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The Shura Council is considered a platform for every leader due to the connection and follow-up on many matters related to the community, such as projects, budgets, government sector plans, and much more.

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work, he highlights his intent to support youth and family projects and contribute towards empowering communities. He is currently involved in a host of activities related to charitable works and community events.

#### The Drive Behind Leadership

It is this very passion for charity and volunteerism that drives Al Sarmi to excellence. "This position, considered as one of the charitable roles, allows me to contribute directly to works that support health sector," he asserts. His commitment extends to ensuring that healthcare services are inclusive and

accessible, reflecting his vision of a comprehensive health system that serves all segments of the population.

"I will work on directing charitable donations to support the programs and services needed by the wilayats and hospitals in the Sultanate, in order to enhance their efficiency and achieve a level of inclusivity in providing health services throughout the country," he notes.

#### A Personal Philosophy of Community Development

Al Sarmi's leadership philosophy is rooted in the belief that community work is fundamental to societal development. "Improving the quality of life is my motivation," he states, pointing out that it pushes him to enhance efforts and adopt charitable community initiatives. He sees community initiatives as not only beneficial but essential for strengthening societal bonds and cohesion. This holistic approach underscores his commitment to fostering an environment where charitable efforts can thrive.

#### Navigating Challenges

Throughout his career, Al Sarmi has encountered various challenges, particularly regarding community engagement and volunteerism. The biggest challenge, he points out is convincing the community of the importance of the work they do, as well as sourcing field volunteers to serve

the community.

Additionally, he highlights legal constraints related to volunteer efforts as obstacles that need addressing. "There are some challenges in the laws related to volunteer work," he admits. Nevertheless, these challenges have only reinforced his resolve to enhance community involvement and advocate for necessary policy changes.

#### Governance and Sustainable Growth

With extensive experience in governance, Al Sarmi understands that effective resource management is key to sustainable development. "As everyone would be aware, governance ensures that organisations use their resources optimally; it also helps achieve sustainable growth and encourage productivity," he explains.

He believes that when leaders are committed to governance principles, they can successfully address developmental challenges and steer their organizations toward achieving their goals. "They are better prepared to face the challenges of development and push their organisation to success and achieve their goals," he states.

#### A Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, Al Sarmi envisions a renaissance in voluntary efforts within Omani society. Explaining further, he adds: "I hope to see a high-end societal renaissance in the voluntary

field, and a community that is more cohesive with its customs, traditions and religion. I hope to see associations and organizations that are more interested in creating mechanisms of cooperation and synergy between society."

#### Advice for Aspiring Leaders

For those inspired by his journey, Al Sarmi has a poignant message: "My advice for every leader is to be honest at work, as well as with your colleagues as a team to ensure that you achieve your goals." This emphasis on integrity and teamwork reflects his own experiences and the values he strives to uphold in his leadership.

#### Leaving a Lasting Legacy

As he reflects on his career and the legacy he hopes to leave as a leader, Al Sarmi ponders over the need for a law to guide volunteer work. "I hope that there will be a special law for volunteer work and that everyone will work like one body in cooperation and love prevails for everyone," he states, reflectively.

His vision extends beyond personal accomplishments, aiming to create a framework that supports volunteerism as a cornerstone of Omani society. As he continues to champion charitable work and community development, Al Sarmi's vision for a healthier, more cohesive society remains a guiding light for future generations.



# Pioneering Oman's Audiovisual Landscape

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A close witness to the fast-emerging changes in the Omani media horizon, Khalid Al Zadjali's journey as a renowned broadcaster is marked by innovation and dedication that have contributed to shaping the country's media industry.

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At the start of my career, media technologies were modest compared to what we witness today. The tools we used in radio and television required precise skills, and there was no luxury of modern equipment. To overcome this challenge, I worked on developing my skills using what was available, taking advantage of training and self-learning.

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Khalid Al Zadjali



**K**halid Al Zadjali, a prominent figure in Oman's media horizon, has made significant contributions to the nation's broadcasting industry. As a former director of youth radio from 2011 to 2014, he played a pivotal role in shaping the radio landscape, particularly for young audiences. Currently, he serves as a broadcaster at Muscat FM Radio, where he continues to engage listeners with his insightful commentary and captivating storytelling. Recognised for his dedication to the field, Al Zadjali is also the proud recipient of the Fourth Class Oman Medal.

Highlighting the remarkable evolution of the media landscape in Oman, he states: "The media scene in Oman has witnessed significant developments over the past few decades. This transformation has been driven by the Sultanate's ambitious vision for comprehensive growth across various sectors, including media."

While the early days saw a focus on broadcasting news and information, the more recent years have witnessed a diversification of content to cater to a wider audience. The advent of digital media has revolutionised the way Omani media operates, with online

platforms and social media playing an increasingly important role.

#### Oman's Media Landscape

According to Zadjali, Omani media began with clear objectives: "We aimed to disseminate information and news, enhance community cohesion, and express the identity and culture of the Omani community." Over time, the media landscape evolved, undergoing a qualitative leap toward specialisation and content diversity, he notes, pointing out that specialised media channels emerged focusing on news, culture, sports, and youth interests.

Today, media has expanded beyond traditional radio and television, embracing digital platforms and developing websites for newspapers and channels, alongside leveraging social media for audience engagement.

Explaining about the impact of new radio stations, he adds, "The launch of youth radio and Quran Radio has significantly diversified radio content in Oman. Besides, the emergence of private radio stations contributed new and varied content. This diversity has fostered competition among radio stations, which has, in turn, improved

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The launch of youth radio and Quran Radio has significantly diversified radio content in Oman. Besides, the emergence of private radio stations contributed new and varied content. This diversity has fostered competition and improved the quality of programming.”

the quality of programming.”

#### Future of Radio in Oman

The future of Omani radio, lies in its ability to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of its audience, opines Zadjali. Sharing his thoughts on the future of Omani radio, he states: "We can expect many changes in terms of both form and content. Traditional radio will continue evolving to meet the changing needs of listeners."

This evolution, he maintains, will involve greater investment in digital technologies and the development of interactive content that aligns with contemporary trends. "We may see increased integration of technology, such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality, enabling innovative interactive programs," he observes.

#### Private Radio Stations

Remarking on the vital role of private radio stations in enriching media diversity in Oman, Zadjali notes, "They are inclined to adopt innovative approaches to content delivery and enjoy greater flexibility in experimenting with new ideas." He believes that the future of private radio could involve more independence and dis-

tinctiveness in content, reinforcing their role as platforms for providing objective and interactive information. "The diversity will allow private stations to cater to listeners seeking varied content that aligns with their personal interests," he adds.

#### Challenges Facing Traditional Radio Stations

Discussing the challenges traditional radio faces today, Zadjali points out that "in the face of rapid digital advancement, traditional radio stations are confronting substantial obstacles." Listeners today prefer immediate access to content at their convenience through podcasts, live streaming, and social media, he maintains.

"Moreover, the younger generation leans towards fast, interactive content, compelling traditional radio to adapt to these changes to maintain its audience," he stresses.

To counter this trend, Al Zadjali suggests embracing new technologies and creating more interactive content is crucial for the survival of traditional radio.

#### Navigating the Media Landscape

Zadjali admits that his media journey has been filled with challenges that have contributed to shaping his professional character and honing his skills in the field. "From my early days in radio and television, I realised that I needed practical experience and additional skills. Therefore, I sought to develop myself by participating in numerous training courses both within the Sultanate and abroad, particularly in Damascus and Cairo, which allowed me to gain refreshed knowledge," he states.

Highlighting the transition from public to private media, he notes that the transition presented a new challenge, as private media requires quick adaptation to market changes and audience needs.

At Muscat Radio, Zadjali found a welcoming environment that fostered his growth as a media professional alongside a dedicated team of colleagues.

Over time, he gained a deep understanding of the fundamental differences between public and private sectors, allowing him to develop content that resonates with the spirit of youth and a new generation of listeners. "With support from the radio management, I was able to leave a distinc-



tive mark," he notes.

Pointing out that live shows often come with amusing and occasionally embarrassing moments that demand flexibility and professionalism, Zadjali states, "These situations required quick thinking and the ability to control the moment, regardless of how awkward it was. I learned to respond intelligently and turn embarrassing moments into positive experiences, adding vitality and fun to the program."

He emphasizes that perseverance and continuous learning are the keys to success in the ever-evolving media landscape. "The future of radio and media in Oman holds vast prospects amid rapid global changes," he said, highlighting the impact of digital transformations that increasingly target youth as a primary audience.

By enhancing radio content to meet the needs of the new generation, Zadjali believes that radio can effectively engage Omani youth, making them an integral part of its audience in the years to come.

#### Balancing Act

Reflecting on the challenges of being a public figure, Zadjali states, "Being a media professional means being constantly in the spotlight, which comes with great responsibility. Maintaining a balance between public and private life has been a learning journey for him. This balance requires skill and deep awareness."

It also means setting boundaries, managing time effectively, and dedicating moments to family and personal passions. "I have learned that this balance does not mean a complete separation between public and private life, but rather achieving harmony between the two," he states, adding that this approach allows media professionals to excel in their work while leading fulfilling personal lives.

#### Future Outlook for Radio in Oman

Looking ahead, the future of Omani radio is poised for transformation, opines Zadjali. Traditional stations are expected to evolve further to meet listeners' changing needs, with a focus on digital investment and interactive content development.

The integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality may pave the way for innovative programming that enhances listener experiences, he observes.

In conclusion, Khalid Al Zadjali believes that the future of radio in Oman is bright.

"Media institutions must remain flexible and responsive to developments and the aspirations of youth, achieving a balance between content that expresses authenticity while keeping up with modern trends," he states. With this vision, he asserts that radio can become the foremost destination for youth seeking inspiration, guidance, and information.

# Shaping the Future of Education in Oman

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Dr. Said Al Kittani, the Associate Dean for Community Outreach at the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS), has dedicated his life to the betterment of education in Oman. With a career spanning both the public and private sectors, and extensive international experience, Dr. Kittani is a distinguished leader in the educational field.

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The road to learning is not always linear, students may struggle, and that's okay. Educator's role is to guide and support them with compassion. Connection is key. Educators should establish trust and rapport with their students by showing interest in who they are. Building relationships helps create a classroom culture where students feel safe, respected, and valued.

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Dr. Said Al Kittani



**D**r. Kittani's journey - from his early school education in a tent to his current role at MCBS - offers invaluable insights into the evolution of education in Oman and the region. Reflecting on his inspiring educational foray, his diverse professional milestones, the challenges facing education today, and his vision for the future, he states: "The system should provide young Omanis with the tools they need to thrive in a globalised world, equipping them not just with technical skills, but with the mindset to tackle the challenges of the future."

#### Early Education and Inspiration

Dr. Kittani's educational journey began in the late 1960s in Zanzibar, a time when many children attended Qur'an schools. "Like many young Omanis, I started my journey in a Qur'an traditional school where I acquired basic writing and arithmetic skills," he recalls, pointing out that his formal education began in Oman in the 70s.

His passion for learning was nurtured early on by his late uncle, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Kittani, a close friend of the Grand Mufti. "I was fascinated by the Omani traditional calligraphy and the artistic features of writing a book before printing," Dr. Al Kittani reflects. This exposure to literature, poetry, and history sparked a lifelong curiosity that laid the foundation for his educational aspirations.

A pivotal influence on his journey came from the His Majesty the late Sultan Qaboos, who championed ed-

ucation as a transformative force for Oman's development. "In the 70s, I was inspired by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, who believed that education was the main emancipatory force in humanity," he adds.

#### Experience Across Sectors

Dr. Al Kittani's career in education began at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), where he joined as one of the third batch of students in 1988. In the early 1990s he got an opportunity to make his foray into the Ministry of Education, where his passion for education and leadership was cultivated. He recalls working under H.E Dr. Yahya bin Mahfoodh Al-Mandhri, who was also the Vice-chancellor of SQU, and who he credits as "a great educator, leader and mentor".

Reflecting on that time, he states: "Working in the Ministry was a gold mine for me. It exposed me to various aspects of education - educational philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, technology, and more. It gave me a panoramic view of all these areas and more importantly it exposed me to new trends and innovative ideas in education discussed by education experts from different continents in Minister's Office."

By mid 1990s the Omani government started to prepare for Oman 2020 and education was at the heart of the game. "I was honoured to contribute to the national team that was analysing the reality of education and proposing future trends under the supervision of H.E Sayyid Saud bin Ibrahim Al-Busaidi the Minister

of Education, who remained in the post until 2002," he states. During this time, his work with key figures in Omani education, such as Dr. Rawya Al-Busaidi, former Minister of Higher Education, played a major role in the country's educational reforms, including the introduction of subjects like 'Life Skills', IT, and English from an early age.

Dr. Said Al Kittani's career has been shaped by several key milestones. His first major achievement was his appointment as the Secretary of the National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science, where he served as the national liaison between UNESCO, ICESCO, ALECSO, and Oman's government entities. During this time, he played a pivotal role in introducing the 'Education for All' initiative to Oman and represented the country at various global forums. He then went on to serve as the Deputy Permanent Delegate of Oman to UNESCO in Paris, where he worked closely with UNESCO's technical teams, led educational projects, and prepared reports on education across the Gulf region, some of which were published by UNESCO.

In 2011, Dr. Al Kittani transitioned to the private sector, co-founding 'Al-Takween Educational Services', a firm dedicated to helping schools overcome challenges and enhance their global recognition. He also supported major educational initiatives in a GCC country and negotiated key projects with international educational firms. In 2014, he was recruited by the Founding Committee of Muscat University to help establish the institution, collaborating with Oxford Innovation to shape its academic programs, secure approvals, and recruit the senior leadership team.

#### Transitioning to New Roles

For Dr. Al Kittani, transitions between roles have never been about titles. "Titles are important, but they should not restrict one's ability to contribute," he asserts. As Executive Director of Quality and Institutional Performance at Muscat University, he went beyond the expectations of his title to make a broader impact. He believes that the core of effective leadership lies in dedication and a willingness to extend help, regardless of formal roles.

The challenges, however, were not without their difficulties. "Dealing with people in educational institu-

tions can be challenging because we are working with society as a whole. We must balance competing pressures from rapidly advancing technology, changing student needs, and educational traditions," he emphasizes, adding that success in education today requires a commitment to honesty, transparency, and agile decision-making.

#### Strengthening Community Outreach at MCBS

Dr. Al Kittani's leadership in community outreach at MCBS focuses on building meaningful connections with society through a variety of initiatives. "Community outreach at MCBS involves many facets, such as industry liaison, BTEC programs, and sustainability efforts," he explains. Under his leadership, MCBS has introduced open lectures, guest speakers, and public events that foster engagement with the wider community. "We also support students' charitable and voluntary work, and we are actively working on transforming MCBS into a 'green campus' with a strong focus on sustainability and the UN's SDGs," he adds.

These sustainability efforts have contributed to the institution's ranking by 'Times Higher Education' based on the SDGs, which further underscores the college's commitment to global educational standards.

#### Shaping the Future of Education

Dr. Al Kittani predicts significant shifts in education in Oman and the broader region. "Theories like individualised learning, multiple intelligences, and learner-centred education are

becoming more relevant today, especially with the advent of AI and its applications in education," he says. He believes that educational institutions will need to adapt quickly to new technologies and rethink how learning is assessed. "Students will have more autonomy and flexibility in how they learn. Institutions will need to be more agile, and educational leaders will need to foster a culture of continuous innovation."

Moreover, he stresses that educational institutions must behave more like businesses, becoming more responsive and dynamic in order to compete globally. "In the future, education will not be static. We need to rethink how we deliver learning and how we can prepare students for a rapidly changing world."

#### Vision for the Future

Dr. Al Kittani envisions a future where education is directly aligned with the country's strategic goals, particularly Oman's Vision 2040. "Education is at the heart of Vision 2040, and at MCBS, we are working to meet these expectations by investing in research, innovation, and sustainability," he shares. As part of the national effort, MCBS has contributed to the government's 11th Five-Year Plan, and the college's future goals include becoming a global leader in research and innovation.

Dr. Al Kittani's vision for the future also includes a greater focus on critical thinking, creativity, and entrepreneurship. "We must equip our students with the skills they need to thrive in a globalized world. By focusing on these areas, Oman's education-



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**Working in the Ministry was a gold mine for me. It exposed me to various aspects of education... It gave me a panoramic view of all these areas and more importantly it exposed me to new trends and innovative ideas in education.**

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al institutions will not only contribute to economic growth but will also foster cultural, intellectual, and social development," he adds.

#### Advice for Aspiring Educators

Dr. Al Kittani's advice for young educators is simple yet profound: "Understand why you chose education." He believes that maintaining a clear sense of purpose is essential for educators, especially as the demands of the profession grow.

"Empathy is crucial in education. Every student comes with their own challenges, and it's our job to guide them with patience and compassion," he notes. Additionally, he encourages educators to stay curious, pursue lifelong learning, and remain flexible in adapting to new educational models and technologies.

#### Balancing Professional and Personal Life

Despite his busy schedule, Dr. Al Kittani finds time for personal passions. "I am a poet and find writing to be a refuge from the pressures of life," he says. He has published two collections of poems and written songs that have been aired on Oman TV and radio. He also attributes his work-life balance to his strong personal values: "I studied what I wanted, married whom I loved, and joined a profession I enjoy. When you get these right, life feels balanced."

# Trailblazer in Marine Science, Advocacy, and Women's Empowerment

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Rumaitha Al Busaidi is a pioneering force in both the environmental and media sectors. Known for her groundbreaking work in marine science, environmental advocacy, and her role as a trailblazer for women in traditionally male-dominated fields, Busaidi has made an indelible mark on Oman and the world.

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I envision a future where youth are not just participants but leaders in various efforts. Their active involvement can lead to more sustainable practices, increased public awareness, and stronger advocacy for policies that protect the environment. By harnessing their potential, we can make substantial progress toward safeguarding our world for future generations.

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Rumaitha Al Busaidi



**A** passionate advocate for youth leadership, climate action, and sustainable practices, Rumaitha uses her platform to elevate these causes on a global scale. She firmly believes that youth are at the forefront of driving meaningful change both in Oman and globally, bringing a fresh perspective and a sense of urgency to environmental issues that are critical for developing effective solutions.

#### **A Deep Connection to the Ocean**

“Growing up along the beautiful coastlines of Oman, I developed a profound appreciation for the ocean and its vital role in sustaining life on our planet - especially my fond love for Oman’s green turtles,” says Rumaitha. Her connection to the marine environment began early, as she grew up surrounded by Oman’s rich marine ecosystems. It was this connection that ignited a lifelong passion for the ocean, culminating in a career in marine science.

Rumaitha’s passion for exploration

led her to experience the world’s most remote environments, including becoming the youngest Omani woman to reach the South Pole. This milestone, part of an expedition aimed at raising awareness about climate change and its impact on fragile ecosystems, was transformative for her. “Witnessing firsthand the effects of climate change reinforced my commitment to environmental conservation,” she reflects. Through scientific research and advocacy, Rumaitha realised she could make a tangible difference in preserving marine life and promoting sustainable practices that benefit both the environment and communities dependent on these vital resources, and that ended up into bigger projects and ambitions.

#### **Using Media to Promote Environmental Conservation**

As an award-winning radio presenter and the first female football analyst in the Arab world, Rumaitha found innovative ways to integrate her passion for the environment into her

broadcasting work. “I leveraged this platform to bridge the gap between complex environmental issues and the general public,” she explains. Through her shows, Rumaitha not only covered sports but also brought attention to climate change, sustainability, and marine conservation, helping listeners understand the interconnectedness of global issues.

She recalls how she would incorporate environmental discussions into her broadcasts, sometimes even linking them to sports topics. “For instance, I discussed the environmental impact of large sporting events and the importance of sustainable practices within the sports industry. This approach helped listeners to become more informed and engaged,” she says. Although Rumaitha has since moved on from broadcasting, the skills she developed in communication and engaging diverse audiences continue to inform her work today, particularly in her environmental advocacy. Her focus now is on leveraging platforms such as public speaking engagements, educational initiatives, and policy advocacy to promote sustainability and conservation.

#### **Global Recognition: BBC 100 Women 2023**

In 2023, Rumaitha was named one of the BBC 100 Women, a prestigious recognition that acknowledges influential women worldwide. “Being named among the BBC 100 Women is both an incredible honour and a humbling experience,” Rumaitha shares. As the first Omani woman to receive this distinction, it not only validated her tireless efforts but also amplified her platform to advocate for environmental issues, women’s empowerment, and youth leadership.

Professionally, this recognition amplifies her platform, allowing her to advocate more effectively for environmental issues, women’s empowerment, and youth leadership. “It places me alongside influential figures such as Michelle Obama, Amal Clooney, and America Ferrera, which not only elevates the visibility of my work but also highlights the potential for impact originating from our region. I hope this recognition inspires young women and girls in Oman and the broader Arab world to realize that there are no limits to what they can achieve,” she adds, underscoring her commitment to breaking barriers for women in her region.

#### **Youth Leadership in Climate Change**

Rumaitha is a staunch advocate for youth leadership, particularly in the field of climate change. One of her most significant projects involved her work with the Arab Youth Council for Climate Change, where she spearheaded research into how young Arabs across the 22 countries of the Arab League view climate change. The data revealed a concerning trend: “Climate anxiety among Arab youth is at an unprecedented high,” Rumaitha notes, emphasising the need for increased attention to climate science and policy.

Her efforts culminated in a presentation at COP28, where she presented these findings to representatives from the Arab League, advocating for the inclusion of young people’s voices in policy-making. “This presentation was pivotal in bringing youth voices into high-level discussions, advocating for the inclusion of young people’s perspectives in environmental decision-making processes,” she reflects. The research has already influenced policy discussions around sustainability and youth involvement in climate action.

#### **Strategies for Engaging Youth**

When it comes to engaging young people in environmental issues, Rumaitha campaigns for a multifaceted approach that includes education, mentorship, and inclusion. “It’s essential to involve youth directly in decision-making processes that affect their futures. By giving them a seat at the table, we validate their concerns and encourage act,” she stresses.

Education is central to this strategy, and Rumaitha believes in providing accessible information and resources to help young people understand the complexities of climate challenges. “I believe in creating platforms where youth can collaborate and lead initiatives,” she adds. She also highlights the importance of mentorship, building supportive networks and ‘multiplier effect’, where “empowering one young person can inspire many others.”

#### **Overcoming Challenges**

Rumaitha’s journey has not been without its challenges, particularly in the male-dominated fields of sports broadcasting and environmental science. As the first female football analyst in the Arab world, she faced

scepticism and doubt, but she remained steadfast in her belief that “perseverance and self-belief” would carry her through. Overcoming societal pressures required resilience, support from mentors, and a focus on her larger mission to inspire others and advocate for change.

“I learned to focus on feedback that would help me grow and disregard negativity that didn’t serve a purpose,” she says, emphasising the importance of staying true to her passions and vision.

#### **Breaking Barriers**

For young women aspiring to enter fields traditionally dominated by men, Rumaitha offers invaluable advice: “Understand that your aspirations are not just about personal achievements, but also about paving the way for oth-

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**Growing up along the beautiful coastlines of Oman, I developed a profound appreciation for the ocean and its vital role in sustaining life on our planet - especially my fond love for Oman’s green turtles.**”



ers and contributing to a more inclusive society.” She encourages women to find their inner drive and remain steadfast in the face of adversity. Her advice: “Embrace the discomfort that may come with breaking new ground, and view it as a sign of growth.” And, on the importance of mentorship, she adds: “Surround yourself with people who believe in your potential and can provide constructive feedback.”

#### **Vision for Change**

Looking ahead, Rumaitha is committed to furthering her work in climate change, particularly in the areas of policy advocacy and youth empowerment. “I intend to engage in roles that allow me to influence policy, contribute to international dialogues on climate action, and promote sustainable practices both in Oman and on a global scale,” she explains. Her goals also include increasing women’s representation in leadership roles, believing that this is key to creating effective solutions for environmental challenges. Her ultimate aim is to create a lasting legacy: “My aspiration is to be remembered as someone who championed causes for the global good but also broke down barriers for women and youth in traditionally male-dominated fields.” Through her work, Rumaitha hopes to inspire future generations to take action and continue the fight for a better world.

Her legacy will undoubtedly be one of empowerment—of women, youth, and the environment. “I want my legacy to reflect a lifelong commitment to making the world a better place—one where environmental stewardship is a shared priority, and where every individual feels empowered to contribute to the well-being of our planet,” she stresses.

# From Banker to Acclaimed Photographer

Having made history as the first Omani photographer to join the prestigious ranks of National Geographic, Haitham Al Farsi continues to captivate audiences with his stunning images. His work beautifully captures the essence of Oman's landscapes, culture, and natural wonders, earning recognition in prestigious publications worldwide.

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Receiving the Royal Commendation Medal signifies recognition not just for me but for all photographers and content creators. It shows that our work is appreciated at the highest level; it has inspired many in the community. People were particularly thrilled that a young photographer received this honour, as awards like this typically go to professors, doctors, or professional athletes

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Haitham Al Farsi



**H**aitham Al Farsi is not just a name in Oman's photography scene; he's a storyteller, a cultural ambassador, and an inspiration to many aspiring content creators. With over 320 awards to his name, Al Farsi's journey from banker to celebrated photographer is a testament to his passion and dedication. He has captured the essence of Oman, from its breathtaking landscapes to the daily lives of its people, while also earning significant accolades, including the Royal Commendation Medal from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

#### From Banking to Photography

Al Farsi's story began in 2012 when a chance encounter at a shopping mall led him to purchase his first camera. "I used to be a banker," he recalls. "I just saw an offer on a camera, bought it, and started my journey." He credits his sister, now a doctor, as his first model, marking the beginning of a profound self-learning adventure in

photography.

"Since then, I have been learning through various resources, from senior photographers to online platforms like YouTube and social media. In 2017, I made the crucial decision to leave my banking career behind and pursue photography full-time. It was a leap of faith," he says, reflecting on the moment that changed his life.

Al Farsi attributes his transition - from the coveted banking job to photography - to time management. "A day before submitting my resignation, I was involved in a photography project, which I couldn't finish and had to postpone it to the next week. I was doing well in photography, but my banking job consumed a lot of time and energy. So, I just woke up next day and decided to quit," he recalls.

#### A Photographer's Perspective

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 marked another turning point. Al Farsi volunteered with the Supreme Committee to document

the pandemic's impact across Oman. "For two years, I focused solely on documenting COVID-related events in hospitals and elsewhere," he points out.

His photographs received international attention, appearing in publications like National Geographic and Reuters. "My images captured the stories of resilience during those challenging times," he explains.

In 2021, things took yet another pleasant turn when he decided to venture into content creation, sharing his own stories to his subscribers and followers.

That year also marked a major milestone in his flourishing career as he signed a collaboration with National Geographic, which saw him undertaking several prestigious assignments focused on Oman. "I have completed around 12 projects, including those on the Arabian Humpback Whale, Green Turtle, and the harvest season for dates," he states.

#### Royal Recognition

Since the start of his photography career in 2012, Al Farsi has garnered over 320 international and local awards; however, it is the prestigious Royal Commendation Medal from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, that stands tall.

"It was a big achievement for me. To be recognised by His Majesty the Sultan himself is a huge honour, not just for me, but for the entire photography community in Oman," he shares.

What adds a fun twist to this achievement is the little prank he pulled on his friends. He was in Qatar covering the Asia Cup when he received the call about the medal and had to rush back home. "As I was getting ready for the ceremony, I took a selfie and posted it on my group, saying it's my wedding day. I was wearing the Bisht with the khanjar and did look like a groom. That selfie opened up a barrage of questions, but I didn't reveal my commendation medal to anyone, except two of my friends who were helping me get ready for the event," he quips. That medal, notes Farsi, is a significant acknowledgment not just for him, but for all photographers and content creators in Oman. "It shows that our stories matter, and they deserve to be recognised. It's an honour for all photographers, content creators, and even social media influencers. Normally only professors,

doctors, professional sportsmen...get this kind of achievement. And suddenly a young guy who does social media, photography, and tries to tell stories, got a medal," he states.

Another highlight of his career was contributing to Oman's new currency. His photographs grace the banknotes, making him a part of the nation's history. "This project is exceptionally special to me. Having my work featured on the national currency is a huge achievement, and I often say, 'My picture is in everyone's pocket in Oman'."

#### Telling Omani Stories

Al Farsi's collaboration with National Geographic has profoundly influenced his work as they focus on the stories behind the images. This perspective aligns with his own approach to photography, where he prioritizes meaningful narratives. "If a story inspires me, I feel compelled to capture it through photography or video. It has to resonate with me first," he states.

Moving forward, Al Farsi envisions a future where he focuses even more on stories of Oman's people. "In 2025, I plan to launch a project that dives deep into the lives of individuals across the country, highlighting their journeys and struggles. Each street in Oman has a story waiting to be told," he says passionately, adding that he plans to work on ten to 12 documentary videos that are embedded with deep meaningful stories from Oman.

Underscoring the significance of Photography and content creation for promoting Omani culture, he explains that in the past storytelling was primarily done through established channels, but today anyone can share their narrative.

However, he stresses on the importance of telling one's story in their



Since the start of his photography career in 2012, Al Farsi has garnered over 320 international and local awards; however, it is the prestigious Royal Commendation Medal from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, that stands tall

own special way. Calling on content creators not to wait for other people or outside media to tell the world about Oman, he states: "We have to tell our story from our perspective, our hearts; because any story on Oman, if it's created by people who live here, will only come from their hearts."

For all aspiring photographers, Al

Farsi's advice is to uphold passion over profit. "Work from the heart. This field requires dedication. It's not just about making money; invest in yourself and your craft," he states.

#### A Lasting Legacy

As Al Farsi continues to capture the essence of Oman through his lens, his vision for the future of photography in the country remains bright. "I aspire to establish a photography or media school, where I can teach and help others create compelling content. I believe that nurturing the next generation of photographers and videographers is essential for the future of Oman's storytelling. If I can nurture just one talented student from each class, it's a win for all of us," he states.

In a world increasingly driven by digital content, Al Farsi's work serves as a reminder of the power of storytelling through photography. He is not just capturing images, he is preserving the rich tapestry of Omani culture for generations to come.





# Oman in 2024: Key Milestones in Growth, Innovation, and Sustainability

**As 2024 draws to a close, Oman has marked a year of remarkable achievements across various sectors, underscoring its commitment to economic diversification, sustainability, and social development.**

**F**rom groundbreaking infrastructure projects to the advancement of its education and healthcare systems, the Sultanate has taken significant steps toward securing its future and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens. Let's take a closer look at some of the key milestones that have defined Oman's progress this year.

## **A Year of Digital Transformation and Economic Diversification**

Oman has made significant strides in its digital transformation and economic diversification efforts in 2024. Several key initiatives and platforms have been launched to drive growth and attract investment.

The Oman Investment Author-

ity (OIA) has been at the forefront of these initiatives. It launched the Future Fund Oman to stimulate economic diversification and attract foreign investment. This fund, with a capital of RO 2 billion, aims to allocate 90 percent of its capital to new or existing projects, with the remaining 10 percent dedicated to SMEs and startups.

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals introduced the 'Taqah' digital platform to facilitate investment in the energy and minerals sector. Additionally, OIA launched the 'Qimam' platform for In-Country Value (ICV) inquiries and unveiled its Social Investment Policy for OIA Companies.

In the real estate sector, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning approved 151 new projects to be im-

plemented through auctions. These projects aim to boost commercial and agricultural development and improve land-use efficiency. The ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources, has also launched 89 new investment opportunities in the agriculture sector.

These initiatives demonstrate Oman's commitment to creating a dynamic and investor-friendly environment. By leveraging digital technologies and promoting sustainable development, the country aims to secure a prosperous future for its people.

## **Advancements in Renewable Energy and Sustainability**

Oman continued to make significant strides in its green energy initiatives in 2024, underscoring its commitment to sustainability and environmental preservation. The nation is investing more than \$30 billion into the hydrogen economy, with the ambitious goal of becoming one of the world's largest producers of green hydrogen by 2030. This initiative aligns with Oman's broader vision to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, as outlined in a national plan that prioritizes the accelerated growth of clean energy projects.

On the renewable energy front, Oman has set a target for 30 percent renewable energy in its total energy supply by 2030. In support of this goal, the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) launched the 'Our Sustainable Energy' campaign in Salalah, aimed at raising public awareness about clean energy and promoting responsible energy consumption. The APSR also revealed plans to establish five new wind power stations and advance solar energy projects, including those at Ibri and Manah, as part of its efforts to expand Oman's renewable energy capacity.

## **Healthcare Innovation and Expansion**

Oman's healthcare system continued to evolve in 2024, with major investments in both infrastructure and digital health technologies. The recent launch of the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Services marked a key milestone in the country's efforts to improve healthcare access and quality. The new facility is set to serve not only the military and security personnel but also provide





advanced healthcare services to their families, further integrating healthcare with Oman's broader national security strategy.

It is pertinent to note that the Oman Medical Specialty Board is leading the way with 31 initiatives aimed at enhancing medical education and training. These initiatives prioritize partnerships with the private sector, the development of advanced training content, and the empowerment of healthcare professionals.

To meet the rising demand for healthcare services, the government is investing over RO55 million in four major medical projects. Among these projects is the expansion of hospitals and health centers, including a significant investment in Dhofar Governorate, where nine new healthcare facilities are being developed, totalling RO 160 million. The Ministry of Health is also planning to implement 10 additional projects in Dhofar Governorate over the next two years to further strengthen the healthcare infrastructure.

#### Education and Skills Development

Oman's education sector also saw substantial developments in 2024, most notably with the launch of the National School Performance Evaluation System, which aims to enhance the quality and accountability of the nation's schools. The system, set to be launched before the end of the

year, will evaluate schools based on a set of defined performance indicators and provide support for schools that require improvement. This initiative is part of Oman's broader strategy to create a knowledge-based economy, where a highly skilled workforce is equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The Ministry of Education's ambitious plans for the 2024-2025 academic year includes the appointment of over 3,000 new teachers as part of a broader plan to recruit 10,000 educators during the current five-year plan. The ministry is also focusing on curriculum development, with a particular emphasis on strengthening foundational skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Key initiatives feature the introduction of engineering and industrial specializations in select schools in Muscat and North Al Batinah Governorates, as well as the launch of advanced digital systems in education. Additionally, the Ministry is opening 16 new school buildings to accommodate growing student numbers and improve facilities, while also working to gradually replace outdated school buses to improve security and safety standards across the country.

#### Tourism and Infrastructure Development

Oman's tourism sector flourished in 2024, with the country emerging as a sought-after destination for eco-tour-

ism, adventure tourism, and cultural exploration. The opening of new luxury resorts and eco-friendly hotels, along with the continued development of the Oman Tourism Strategy, which includes the promotion of lesser-known destinations, helped draw a record number of international visitors.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism also signed 10 usufruct contracts to develop tourism projects across the country, including hotels, resorts, and tourist camps. These projects (valued at over RO 6 million), aimed at boosting the tourism sector, include a variety of developments such as a 3-star hotel and tourist rest house in Salalah, a tourist camp in Thumrait, and a resort in Shalim and the Halaniyat Islands in Dhofar. Other initiatives include an adventure center in Barakat Al Sharaf, a 3-star resort in Misfat Al Abriyeen, luxury tourist camps in Wadi Mastal, Nakhal, and Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, among others.

The government's tourism strategy is focused on increasing the sector's contribution to the national GDP to 10 percent by 2040, with a target of attracting 11.7 million tourists and over \$51 billion in investments.

Oman's airports have also witnessed remarkable growth in 2024, with passenger traffic surpassing 8.4 million. Muscat International Airport, the nation's primary hub, recorded a significant increase in both domestic and international passenger numbers. Salalah Airport also experienced substantial growth, attracting more tourists to the region. The growth in air traffic is attributed to both an increase in international and domestic flights, with Oman's airports positioning themselves as key regional hubs.

As Oman progresses through 2024, the country is clearly on track to achieve many of its long-term goals as outlined in Vision 2040. With its focus on economic diversification, sustainability, education, and social development, Oman has not only made significant strides in enhancing the well-being of its citizens but has also positioned itself as a regional leader in innovation, environmental stewardship, and human capital development.

Looking ahead, Oman's achievements in 2024 serve as a foundation for even greater advancements in the years to come, as the country continues to evolve in line with global trends while preserving its rich cultural heritage and commitment to sustainable development.



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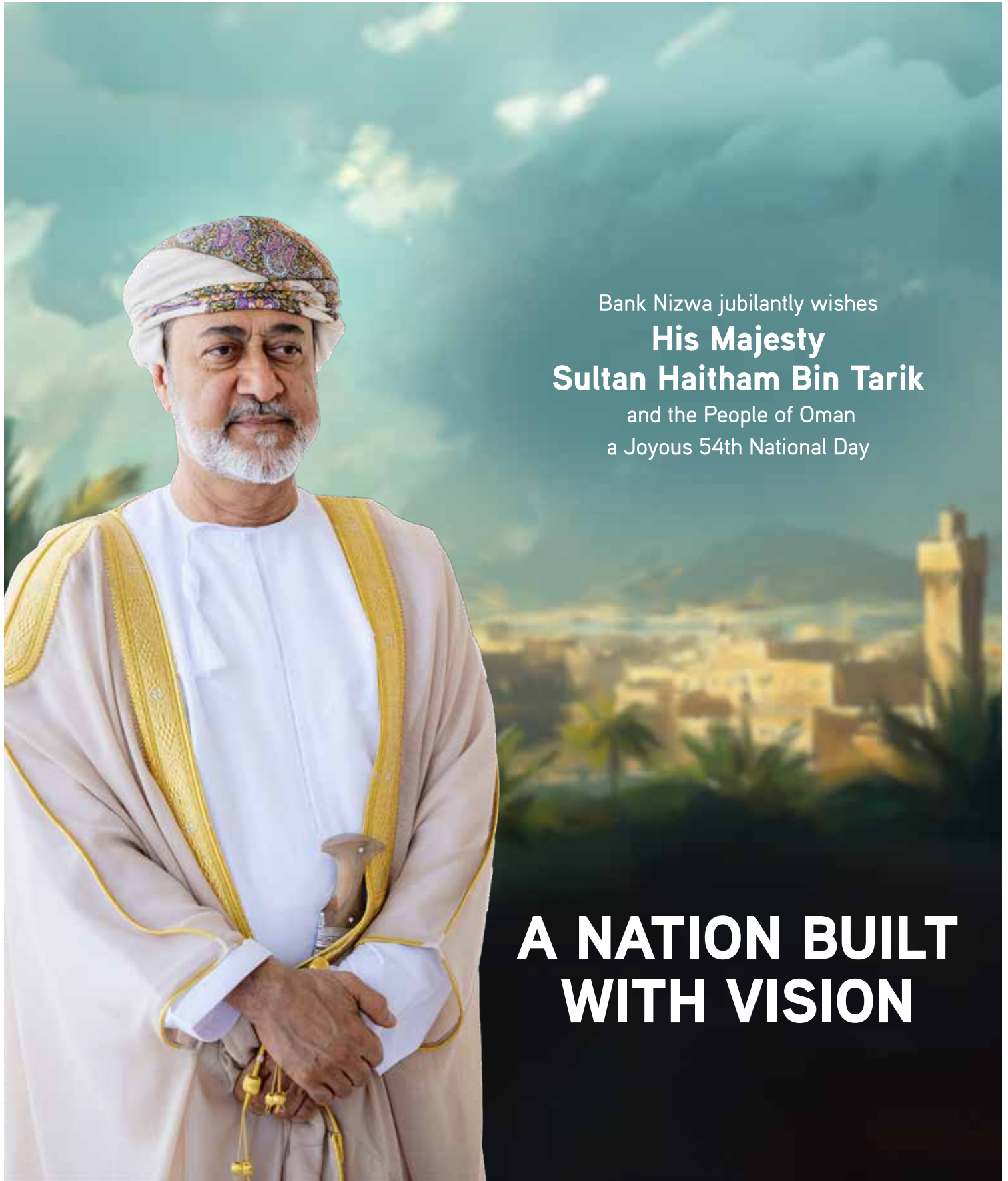
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