

# TAS ICONS



# OMAN'S GAME-CHANGERS

CHAMPIONS OF PROGRESS, SHAPING THE NATION'S NEXT STEP



# 5 ICONS ONE STAGE

ENDLESS INSPIRATION





Felicitations to  
**His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik**  
and the people of Oman on **National Day**





---

## TAS ICONS / Edition Six

---

**Said Ahmed Ali Al Mahruqi** Editor-in-Chief  
info@thearabianstories.com

**Nishad Padiyarth** Founder & CEO  
ceo@thearabianstories.com

### Editorial

**Gayathri Das** Chief Content Officer  
**Suzy Fontes** Associate Editor  
**Tahera Rangwala** Digital Asset Manager  
**Paul Reji George** Assistant Editor  
**Thikra Al Salti** Multi-media Specialist

### Marketing

**Khushbu Toprani** Chief Commercial Officer  
**Omais Al Julandani** Manager-Business Development  
**Mohammed Muzammil Nayaz** Sales Executive

### Design

**Manoj Kumar** Deputy Chief Designer  
**Anoop K Anujan** Senior Videographer  
**Adhil Thattarathil** Assistant Videographer

Copyright 2025 / The Arabian Stories  
All Rights Reserved



The Arabian Stories Press & Electronic Media LLC  
P.O. Box: 1565, P. C. 112, Sultanate of Oman



Ibn Ahmed United Enterprises  
P.O. Box: 2531, P. C. 112, Sultanate of Oman

# A NATION OF DREAMS. A FUTURE OF PROGRESS.

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



As we commemorate our 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.





## Cover Story

A Global Path of Wisdom: His Majesty Sultan Haitham's Diplomatic Renaissance **P08**

## TAS Icons of Oman

Celebrating Leadership, Vision & Impact

**P14**

## Oman 2025: Building the Future, Living the Vision

The year 2025 marks a historic turning point, demonstrating Oman's unwavering commitment to a diversified, modern, and sustainable future.

**P46**

# Honouring Oman's Journey Empowering Its Future

Khimji Ramdas extends its sincere congratulations to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** and the people of Oman on the occasion of the glorious **National Day**.

As the nation continues to thrive under Oman Vision 2040, we remain committed to supporting progress and uplifting communities, every step of the way.



التميز بثقة  
Moving Forward  
with Confidence



**KR**  
كيمجي رامداس  
KHIMJI RAMDAS

# A Global Path of Wisdom: His Majesty Sultan Haitham's Diplomatic Renaissance

Over five years, His Majesty's state visits across the Gulf, Europe, and Asia have reshaped Oman's global engagement rooted in dialogue, dignity, and a confident vision for the future.





---

**This is not a diplomacy of spectacle. It is a diplomacy of conviction guided by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, a leader who carries Oman's heritage of wisdom with a modern compass set firmly toward the future.**

conomic destiny of the region.

In an era where alliances shift and politics accelerate, Oman doubled down on its nearest bonds quietly strengthening its Gulf and Arab partnerships with visits also to Jordan, Egypt, and Algeria. These moments reinforced a fundamental truth: in the Arab world, trust is earned, not declared and Oman earns it by listening, by mediating, by showing up.

**W**hen Oman looks back on the first five years of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's reign, one defining pillar of leadership will stand tall: diplomacy with purpose.

Nineteen state visits in five years are not simply journeys they are signals. Signals of a nation stepping forward, expanding its partnerships, and deepening its global voice with quiet confidence and strategic clarity.

There are moments in a nation's history when diplomacy becomes more than protocol when it transforms into a quiet force shaping identity, direction, and destiny.

For Oman, the past five years have been such a moment.

Nineteen state visits across the Gulf, Europe, and Asia; to global powers and rising economies; to historic allies and new partners. Each step deliberate. Each handshake purposeful.

Each visit part of a wider vision that is steadily, confidently, and gracefully lifting Oman back to the heart of international dialogue.

This is not a diplomacy of spectacle. It is a diplomacy of conviction guided by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, a leader who carries Oman's heritage of wisdom with a modern compass set firmly toward the future.

#### **A journey that began at home — in the Gulf**

His Majesty's first moves were not across oceans, but across the neighbourhood to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait. These visits were more than ceremonial gestures to fellow Gulf leaders; they were a reaffirmation of home. A message that Oman's progress is tied to the stability, unity, and shared eco-

#### **Europe: where vision meets opportunity**

From London to Rome, Madrid to Brussels, The Hague to Minsk — His Majesty's engagements across Europe signaled ambition tempered with clarity. Europe sees in Oman a dependable partner. Oman sees in Europe innovation, investment, and avenues for transformation from renewable energy and logistics to culture and education.

In these visits, Oman was not merely welcomed it was respected. Seen not just as a partner, but as a nation balancing tradition with modernity, stability with growth, identity with openness.

#### **The call of Asia and the power of connection**

To look east is to look forward. His



**In a world where modernisation often comes at the expense of tradition, Oman under His Majesty Sultan Haitham is charting a different path, one where progress strengthens identity rather than erasing it.**



Majesty's visits to India, Singapore, Turkey, and Iran tapped into old routes and new realities where energy, trade, technology, and maritime routes shape tomorrow's prosperity. Oman's role in the Indian Ocean, once defined by ancient dhows, is now emerging through ports, green fuel corridors, digital trade, and global logistics chains.

Here, diplomacy is more than pol-

itics it is economic strategy. It is the architecture of the future.

#### **A leader calm in complexity**

In a world of noise, Oman remains the voice of quiet strength. In a time of division, Oman remains a bridge.

His Majesty's visit to Moscow underscored this once again Oman speaks to all, honours all, and stands

by its principles while building relationships others cannot. That is not neutrality that is strategic maturity.

#### **Nineteen visits. Five years. One direction.**

These travels are not a tally; they are a statement. A return to active global engagement after a period of global uncertainty. A reminder that nations





do not rise by waiting they rise by reaching out, building trust, investing in relationships, and believing in their place in the world.

And Oman guided by a leader who values dignity over drama, substance over noise is doing just that.

### **The story of a nation stepping forward**

When future generations look back

at this era, they will not only see treaties signed, investments secured, and handshakes exchanged. They will see the beginning of a renewed Omani footprint in world affairs grounded in dialogue, peace, mutual respect, and ambition.

Nineteen journeys are not simply travels.

They are the map of a vision.

A vision of an Oman confident in its

identity and fearless in its future.

An Oman rooted in wisdom yet rising with modern purpose.

An Oman stepping into the world not loudly, but unmistakably.

Under His Majesty Sultan Haitham, diplomacy is not a tool. It is a legacy in the making. A promise. A new chapter in the Omani story.

And it has only just begun.

“

**ADVANCING MOBILITY  
THROUGH BOLD, FORWARD-  
THINKING LEADERSHIP**

– Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani



“

**POSITIONING OMAN GLOBALLY THROUGH  
EXCEPTIONAL TOURISM EXPERIENCES**

– Shabib Bin Mohamed Al Maamari

**“ ELEVATING FINANCIAL EXCELLENCE  
ACROSS OMAN AND BEYOND**

– Faisal Al Nabhani

IN THIS SPECIAL EDITION, WE SPOTLIGHT **FIVE REMARKABLE TAS ICONS** WHOSE INNOVATION, INFLUENCE, AND STEADFAST LEADERSHIP CONTINUE TO SHAPE OMAN’S BUSINESS LANDSCAPE. THESE DISTINGUISHED TRAILBLAZERS REPRESENT THE SPIRIT OF AMBITION AND PROGRESS THAT DEFINES THE SULTANATE TODAY.



**“**

**DELIVERING SMART  
BUSINESS SOLUTIONS FOR  
TOMORROW’S NEEDS**

– Ahmed Ibrahim Al Ajmi



**“**

**DRIVING MEANINGFUL CHANGE  
THROUGH HUMAN-CENTRED STRATEGY**

– Ibtisam Al-Khaifi

# Faisal Al Nabhani: Building Bridges Between Diplomacy and Finance

---

From representing Oman on the global stage at the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation to leading regional operations of one of the world's largest financial institutions, Faisal Al Nabhani embodies a rare fusion of diplomacy, intellect, and strategic foresight.

“

When people know you are consistent, reliable and principled, it cuts through ambiguity and creates a foundation of trust. It has allowed me to navigate transitions, because while the context changed – from the UN & WTO chambers in Geneva to the board rooms of the Gulf – the currency of trust remained constant. It is the one asset that appreciates over time, regardless of your title or industry.

”



Faisal Al Nabhani



**F**aisal Al Nabhani's career is a remarkable journey across the worlds of diplomacy, government, and global finance. Today, as Managing Director and Country Representative for State Street in Oman and Qatar, he stands at the helm of one of the world's largest financial institutions, overseeing operations in two of the region's most dynamic economies.

He describes feeling privileged to have had the opportunity to work across such diverse fields; areas that have shaped his approach to his current role at State Street, a global systemically important bank with a long-standing history.

As one of the world's largest custodian banks and asset managers, the institution is entrusted with assets valued at over USD 50 trillion, representing approximately 11.5% of global financial assets, and manages USD 5 trillion in assets.

### **A Leadership Style Forged Through Diversity**

Nabhani's professional journey - spanning roles at the World Trade Organization (WTO), government, and now in the private sector - has profoundly shaped his leadership approach. "It has been a continuous education in stakeholder engagement and operational execution," he notes, describing the leading role in State Street as a "great honour".

Explaining further, he says: "At the WTO and in government, I learned that lasting impact is built on consensus, an understanding of the underlying interests of diverse stakeholders and a long-term vision. In the private sector, the focus is on client centricity, constantly exploring ways to develop our processes to better serve our clients, innovate and produce tangible results."

The synthesis of these experiences

defines his leadership today. "I lead with a diplomat's ear - listening intently to clients, regulators, and my team to build strategic alliances. But I combine this with a business focus on execution and value creation," he notes.

### **Driving Growth Across Oman and Qatar**

As Country Representative for both Oman and Qatar, Nabhani is deeply engaged in aligning State Street's global capabilities with the region's ambitious national visions.

"At State Street, we pride ourselves on our GCC growth story, where we are steadily growing our footprint. The region holds great promise on many levels. It continues to be a resource-rich region with strong economic growth, a talented young work force and fast-growing capital markets," he states.

Identifying a powerful intersection between national vision and global capital, he explains: “Both Oman Vision 2040 and Qatar National Vision 2030 present ambitious blueprints for economic diversification, moving beyond hydrocarbons into knowledge-based, sustainable economies. One of my main responsibilities at State Street is to position ourselves as a partner in this transition. We do this by providing sophisticated investment servicing, analytics and data management that these evolving economies require. Empowering their financial institutions to overcome the challenges of tomorrow.”

This, Nabhani explains, is where both opportunity and challenge converge, requiring one to understand the unique regulatory landscapes, investor appetites and strategic priorities of each nation. “My role is to ensure our global capabilities meet these specific local ambitions, helping to connect the region’s vast potential with the confidence and sophistication of international investors,” he adds.

With this in mind, State Street has been expanding its regional footprint, with its local Commercial Representative Office recently celebrating its two-year anniversary.

### **A Global Perspective on Local Markets**

Having served at the United Nations, Nabhani brings a nuanced understanding of how global economic and political shifts influence local financial markets. He attributes Oman’s stability and neutrality as the key pivots that have helped it weather global economic shocks and financial crises witnessed over the years. According to him, in a globalised world, where financial markets are intertwined with each other and exposed to global markets, three political trends are particularly relevant. He lists them as follows:

First, geopolitical realignments are reshaping trade and investment flows. Oman’s historic neutrality and strategic location position it as a potential hub for stability and logistics, attracting investment that might want to hedge against more volatile regions.

Second, the global energy transition. While it pressures hydrocarbon revenues, it also creates an immense opportunity for Oman to become a leader in future energy solutions, attracting a new class of ESG-focused investors.

Finally, the global macroeconomic environment of rising interest rates and inflation demands sound fiscal policies.

On the local front, he points out that Oman, over the past few years, has led a successful fiscal balancing programme that has cut its Debt to GDP ratio by half. “Combined with its efforts to develop its capital market, Oman’s geostrategic location and political neutrality will enable it to position itself as a country with a promising financial market,” he observes.

### **Lessons in Diplomacy, Communication, and Global Trade**

For someone who has played a key role in advancing Oman’s trade and investment, Nabhani has learnt a lot of important lessons. About his varied learning experiences, he states: “Being placed in a position representing a nation’s economic interests, whether

“

My experience at the WTO and in government taught me that lasting impact comes from consensus, understanding diverse interests, and long-term vision. In the private sector, the focus is on client needs, refining processes, innovating, and delivering tangible results.



in the multilateral setting negotiating trade agreements, as I have done at the WTO, or bilaterally negotiating free trade agreements with other nations, makes one feel humbled and is a sombre reminder of the impact national interests can have on the day to day lives of individuals and enterprises.”

Noting that it could be consumer prices, inflation, the ability of a worker to move to a country, job prospects, or just about anything, he points out that everything is impacted to some degree by what gets decided behind closed doors - between trade officials drawing up the rules governing country-to-country trade relations.

Personally, he was fascinated by the dynamics of the natural/legal person and the nation. “I learned that ‘communication’ is key in international diplomacy, particularly when promoting a country as an investment destination, as meaning can get lost and often does,” he notes.

The same, he opines, holds true even where two parties speak the same language, even more so in arm’s length negotiations. Whether for trade concessions or attracting foreign investors, interactions are ultimately between people, not robots, and repetitive talking points rarely succeed. He

adds that this experience taught him the value of inclusiveness – “in the sense that everyone’s role is important without exception.”

### **The Win-Win Negotiation Mindset**

Nabhani firmly believes that diplomatic skills, such as negotiation and strategic partnerships, are versatile and can be effectively applied in other professions, including financial services. These skills, he notes, are not just transferable but provide a critical competitive advantage.

Pointing out that financial services, at its highest level, is a relationship business built on trust, he explains, “In negotiations, whether at the UN over a resolution or with a major client who is looking for a front office data management solution, the principle remains the same: seek a win-win outcome that preserves the efforts/relationship for the long term. It’s about understanding the underlying interests not just the stated positions.

“Strategic partnerships in diplomacy enable you to build coalitions between like-minded or similarly situated nations with respect to a specific issue to advance a common goal. In

my role at State Street, I do the same. We partner with local financial institutions and government entities to advance our common goals, as their success is our success.”

### **Synthesising Global Best Practices with GCC Realities**

Licensed to practice law in New York and trained at some of the world’s leading institutions, Nabhani brings a truly global perspective to his work. Reflecting on how he bridges international best practices with regional realities, he says, “Every sector has its best practices, whether in international diplomacy, finance or the legal profession, and the region is no different.”

The GCC, as he points out, is developing its own best practices, incorporating the experience of established businesses. “There is no shortage of talent and ambition in region, especially among the youth. This helps immensely when dealing with different parties in Oman, as they are well informed. Different ecosystems in Oman are developing at a good rate, consciously incorporating best practices into their work processes to become competitive, which I think is laudable,” he maintains.





### **Building an Ethical Compass**

Highlighting the importance of continuous learning and positive mindset for success, Nabhani has this to say to young Omanis pursuing careers in diplomacy, law, or finance: Use time wisely and allocate some of it to developing talent and acquiring skills that matter.

His advice for the youth: “No matter what your job is, honing your skills will increase your marketability. Never stop learning. The lines between these fields are blurring. A finance professional who understands geopolitics is more valuable. A diplomat who grasps international law is more effective. A lawyer who understands balance sheets has a greater impact.

“Build your intellectual and ethical framework early. The principles you learn in law school or your first diplomatic post are your compass; they will guide you through tough choices and complex negotiations for the rest of your career.

“Finally, remember that you are a representative of Oman’s future. Carry with you the values of integrity, hard work and respect. Your success will not be measured solely by your personal achievements, but by the doors you open for those who follow. The world is eager to engage with Omani talent; ensure you are well informed and well prepared.”

### **Navigating Transitions with Trust**

Nabhani’s leadership philosophy is embedded in integrity – in words, actions and values – that has helped him transition across different sectors and cultures. Calling it a guiding principle that is universally understood and respected, he says, “In diplomacy, it builds trust between representatives of nations. In law, it is the foundation of the profession. In finance, it is the bedrock of client confidence... It has allowed me to navigate transitions, because while the context changed – from the UN & WTO chambers in Geneva to the board rooms of the Gulf – the currency of trust remained constant. It is the one asset that appreciates over time, regardless of your title or industry.”

### **Defining a Leadership Milestone**

The key milestone of Nabhani’s leadership journey was the moment he internalised that leadership is about empowerment, not just authority. “This shift happened gradually, but it was crystallized during my work on a major multilateral trade agreement Oman took part in negotiating. The milestone wasn’t signing the agreement; it was seeing the team of young Omani professionals I mentored confidently lead the technical negotia-

tions and take ownership of the outcome,” he states, reflectively.

The pinnacle of that journey was “moving from being the sole representative on a given file to a multiplier of talent.”

### **Building Bridges and Cultivating Future Leaders**

Deliberating on the future, and the legacy he hopes to build, Nabhani expresses his hope to have an impact on building a bridge between Oman and the global financial system, contributing to getting the nation involved and having its story heard; as well as highlighting the critical interplay between the public sector’s long-term vision and the private sector’s dynamism and efficiency.

But more than that, he hopes his legacy will be the people he had the privilege to mentor. In conclusion, he states: “I want to have contributed to a generation of Omani and regional professionals who are not only exceptionally skilled but also lead with integrity, think strategically, and carry a sense of responsibility to their communities. If I can look back and see that I played a part, however small, to build both the institutions and the future leaders that secured my region’s prosperous and sustainable future, that would be the ultimate fulfilment.”

# Shabib Al Maamari: How Visit Oman is Digitising the Sultanate of Oman's Tourism Experiences

---

Driven by a vision to connect Oman's diverse and authentic tourism offerings with trade partners and travellers across key global markets, Shabib bin Mohamed Al Maamari, Managing Director of Visit Oman, spearheaded the creation of the Digital Travel Hub (DTH), which has, since its activation in November 2023, connected over 80 airlines, 120+ hotels, and more than 320 authentic experiences - 80% of which are crafted by local SMEs.

“

If you are not engaging with tools like AI, data analytics, or digital platforms, you risk being left behind. The introduction of technologies like ChatGPT and smart trip planners isn't a trend - it's the new standard. Saying “I don't need it” could mean your business or idea becomes obsolete.

”



Shabib bin Mohamed Al Maamari

**W**hen Shabib Al Maamari stepped into the role of leading Visit Oman, he did so with a clear and ambitious vision: to transform not just how Oman is seen by the world, but how the world experiences Oman.

It was a defining moment for Oman's growing tourism industry — one filled with potential, yet fragmented in structure. For years, Oman's breathtaking beauty, warm hospitality, and rich heritage had been known to seasoned travellers and niche adventurers, but they were not yet fully accessible to the global market in a unified, digital way; Visit Oman saw in this gap both a challenge, and an opportunity.

"When I stepped into the role, I was driven by a clear purpose: to transform the way the world experiences Oman," he says, pointing out that the fragmented supply chain served as a catalyst for innovation. "That was our starting point — to create a seamless, scalable, and smart ecosystem that connects local tourism offerings with global demand," he adds.

The solution came to life through Visit Oman's enhanced Digital Travel Hub (DTH), launched in November 2023, following the start of Visit Oman's commercial operations in 2021. Today, the platform represents far more than a booking system; it is a national tourism enabler, scaling the digital distribution of local tourism products. The platforms connect local businesses, from boutique hotels and tour guides to activity providers and transport operators, with international travellers and global travel distributors, driving visibility, accessibility, and growth across Oman's tourism ecosystem.

In less than two years, this digital ecosystem has connected over 80 airlines, 120 hotels, and more than 320 experiences, 80 percent of which are created and operated by Omani SMEs. Through its international partnerships and integrations, Visit Oman now offers seamless access to Oman's tourism portfolio for over 300 million users across 170 countries.

### A Vision Rooted in Purpose

"My leadership style is rooted in visionary thinking, strategic collaboration, and purpose-driven innovation," he states, pointing out that his focus has been on building a culture that

Driven by purpose and innovation, Shabib Al Maamari leads Visit Oman's mission to unite culture, technology, and community - creating a global digital ecosystem that connects travellers to Oman's authentic stories, sustainable tourism, and timeless experiences.

embraces transformation; one where technology, sustainability, and authenticity converge to enhance how Oman is experienced by the world.

The vision for Visit Oman was bold yet grounded in realism from the very beginning. Recognising that the tourism sector faced a fragmented supply chain, Visit Oman made the decision to view this challenge as a catalyst for growth rather than a limitation. Their approach ensured that the industry was positioned for transformation — with the right infrastructure, mindset, and technology aligned to drive progress through technology and partnerships.

"We led the launch of Visit Oman with a clear mission: to digitise the entire booking experience and create a unified travel ecosystem that connects local tourism providers and SMEs with global markets. This required not just operational leadership, but a mindset shift—encouraging our teams and partners to think beyond traditional models and embrace scalable, tech-enabled solutions," he explains.

This spirit of transformation — combining authenticity with innovation — is what has shaped Visit Oman's identity. Every initiative, partnership, and campaign under its umbrella is designed to ensure that Oman's tourism growth remains sustainable, inclusive, and true to its cultural roots.

### Oman's Unique Advantage

What gives Oman an edge in an increasingly competitive global tourism landscape is its unparalleled diversity of landscapes, deeply-rooted cultural heritage, and its commitment to authentic, sustainable tourism - all within remarkably easy reach.

"Few places in the world offer the ability to explore the sea, mountains, and desert—all within a two-hour drive from the capital, Muscat," explains Al Maamari. "This geographic accessibility is a game-changer. In a single day, a traveller can snorkel along the dramatic northern coastline where mountains plunge into the sea, hike through ancient villages nestled in the highlands of Jabal Akhdar, and end the evening



stargazing in the silence of the desert. It's a rare and compelling proposition that sets Oman apart from its regional neighbour's," he adds.

Beyond its natural beauty, Oman offers something increasingly rare in modern tourism: authenticity. The country's communities are at the heart of the visitor experience. Tourism here is not manufactured — it's lived.

Al Maamari recounts one particularly moving story: that of a young man who transformed a single 300-year-old family room in his ancestral village into a modest guesthouse. With time, and through dedication and word-of-mouth, that humble project evolved into a thriving eco-tourism lodge with over 20 rooms, attracting visitors from Europe, Asia, and the region.

"Guests share meals with the host family, explore scenic trails, and even use a zipline to send luggage across the valley — an experience that is as charming as it is memorable," Al Maamari states.

It is these human stories — of families opening their homes, entrepreneurs reviving ancient crafts, and guides preserving local knowledge — that set Oman apart. Visitors leave not only with photographs, but with a connection.

Whether it's stargazing with expert guides who share the Arabic history of constellations, or dining in cliffside villas near world-class resorts, Oman offers a rare blend of authenticity, adventure, and accessibility. It's this balance—between tradition and inno-

vation, simplicity and sophistication—that makes Oman a truly unique and compelling destination on the global tourism map.

### **Oman as a Year-Round Destination**

For long, Oman's peak tourism season was limited to the winter months, when temperatures were milder and conditions ideal for outdoor exploration. But Visit Oman has contributed to changing that perception — unlocking the full potential of its diverse landscapes, digitising access to authentic experiences, and enabling seamless global connectivity to local tourism offerings.

Highlighting Oman's geographic



diversity and the ease of accessibility that allow travellers to enjoy a wide range of experiences regardless of the season, Al Maamari points out that Visit Oman's DTH has made it possible for global travellers to explore and book authentic experiences in every season. Its move from a B2B model to a B2B2C approach marked a significant shift, enabling the organisation to reach travellers directly through global online travel agencies and digital marketplaces.

"Within just three months of introducing B2B2C, Visit Oman became active in over 170 countries, compared to 30 previously. This shift has been a game-changer, allowing us to market Oman's offerings directly to consumers through trusted global platforms," he adds.

Partnerships with major travel platforms such as Trip.com, Expedia, GetYourGuide, and Civitatis have opened previously inaccessible

customer bases and helped market Oman's tourism products at scale, without needing a physical presence in each country.

"These collaborations not only distribute Omani tourism products globally but also include joint targeted marketing campaigns that promote the destination across key source markets. For example, Trip.com's platform alone reaches over 300 million active users, giving Oman unprecedented exposure to international travellers," explains Maamari.

#### **Key Milestones and Campaigns**

On the regional and domestic front, Visit Oman has led and supported several impactful campaigns. In collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, it led the "Live the Vibe" summer campaign, and spearheaded OMRAN Group's "Within Oman" summer campaign, a 360-degree mar-

keting initiative that promoted the group's hotels and experiences across the Sultanate of Oman—driving both awareness and bookings.

To reach younger audiences, Visit Oman took the initiative of embracing influencer marketing and digital storytelling. "By inviting prominent travel influencers—including Apple's Ambassador—to explore and share their experiences in Oman, we have tapped into a powerful form of destination storytelling that resonates with authenticity and emotional connection," he notes. These milestones reflect Visit Oman's commitment to strategic growth, digital innovation, and authentic storytelling. "As we move forward, our focus remains on expanding our reach, optimising user experience, and ensuring Oman's tourism offerings are available on the world's most influential platforms," Al Maamari adds.



### The Power of Digital Transformation

At the heart of Visit Oman's success lies its commitment to technology as the great enabler of accessibility, inclusion, and efficiency. Earlier this year, the organisation upgraded its booking system, introducing a unified platform serving both B2B and B2C audiences.

The system is now integrated via API with leading global bed banks, allowing users to access a vast range of accommodations and experiences without needing to visit multiple platforms. Everything is consolidated—making comparison, selection, and booking faster and more efficient.

For local partners, the impact has been equally transformative. The platform allows Omani travel agents and tour operators to manage both inbound and outbound travel with advanced tools such as instant quotation generation, multi-currency support,

and real-time booking confirmations.

“Ultimately, our digital strategy is about simplifying access, personalising experiences, and scaling visibility. By leveraging technology, we're not just elevating the booking process—we're transforming how travellers connect with Oman, making it easier than ever to explore the country's rich offerings year-round,” says Al Maamari.

This digital-first approach ensures that the Sultanate keeps pace with changing traveller expectations — where personalisation, transparency, and instant access are the new benchmarks of service.

### Sustainability as a Strategic Pillar

Oman's tourism vision has always been anchored in sustainability, and Visit Oman has built this principle into its very foundation.

By digitising local tourism supply chains and connecting small operators to international markets, the company has created a model that not only supports economic growth but also preserves cultural and environmental integrity.

Through its DTH, Visit Oman has empowered hundreds of local entrepreneurs to commercialise their experiences responsibly. Approximately 80 percent of the listed products are developed by Omani SMEs, ensuring that the value of tourism flows directly into the communities that make the experiences possible.

“This digital empowerment translates directly into community investment. When travellers book locally guided hikes, heritage stays, or eco-conscious experiences, the revenue flows back into the villages, families, and entrepreneurs who created them. It's a model that promotes inclusive growth, supports job creation, and ensures that tourism benefits are equitably shared.

### Inspiring Oman's Next Generation

For Al Maamari, the future of tourism in Oman will be shaped not by technology alone, but by the creativity and courage of young Omanis who embrace it.

“My message to young Omanis is simple: embrace technology, stay curious, and be bold,” he states, pointing

out that digital transformation is redefining every aspect of travel—from how people discover destinations to how they book and experience them.

“If you're not engaging with tools like AI, data analytics, or digital platforms, you risk being left behind. The introduction of technologies like ChatGPT and smart trip planners isn't a trend—it's the new standard. Saying “I don't need it” could mean your business or idea becomes obsolete,” he adds.

Al Maamari encourages aspiring professionals to engage in conversations beyond the comfort zone. “Listen to podcasts, follow global operators, and study how others have built successful models; learn from them, adapt, and localise those insights to Oman's unique context,” he advises.

So be proactive, be tech-savvy, and be proud of what Oman has to offer, he stresses. For Al Maamari, leadership in tourism is ultimately about storytelling — using technology and creativity to share the timeless beauty of Oman in new, relevant, and meaningful ways.

“The future of tourism here isn't just about attracting visitors - it's about empowering Omanis to shape how our country is experienced by the world,” he states reflectively.”

Today, Visit Oman stands as a testament to what visionary leadership, collaboration, and innovation can achieve. It has created a digital infrastructure that rivals global platforms, and positioned Oman as one of the most authentic and sustainable destinations in the Middle East.



# Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani: Driving Oman's Future

---

As CEO of MHD ACERE (Automotive, Construction Equipment, and Renewable Energy), Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani steers one of Oman's most diverse conglomerates, applying strategic foresight and rapid innovation to sectors ranging from advanced mobility to healthcare.

“

My leadership philosophy is rooted in clarity of purpose, empowerment, and accountability. I believe in creating space for teams to think boldly, take ownership, and grow. Over the years, I've learned that leadership is not only about making decisions—it's about listening, trusting your people, and staying adaptable.

”



Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani



**T**aking on the demanding role of CEO after a swift progression from the Director of the automotive business - a decisive move aligned with the company's growth objectives - Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani has navigated the company through global challenges while fortifying its decades-old legacy. His leadership is not merely about managing the present but actively shaping a future aligned with Oman Vision 2040; he continues to bridge decades of company legacy with forward-thinking strategies in sustainability, mobility, and healthcare.

With a career marked by rapid progression, visionary leadership, and a commitment to both sustainability and community development, Al Bahrani exemplifies the next generation of Omani business leaders.

### **Balancing Legacy Through Innovation**

For a conglomerate rooted in Oman's history, balancing the past with the future is a constant imperative. Al Bahrani views this not as a conflict, but as a commitment. "Balancing innovation with legacy is central to my role. I see legacy as our foundation—our values, relationships, and trust built over decades. Innovation, on the other hand, is how we honour that legacy in the future," he explains.

"At ACERE, we encourage agility and forward thinking while staying rooted in purpose and integrity. Whether we are introducing new global automotive brands, expanding EV infrastructure, or scaling healthcare solutions, we ensure that every step forward strengthens our long-term

commitment to Oman's development and our customers' confidence in us," Al Bahrani adds.

This dual focus on tradition and forward-thinking strategy has become a hallmark of MHD ACERE under his stewardship. For Al Bahrani, legacy provides a foundation of trust and reliability, while innovation ensures the company continues to adapt and thrive in a rapidly evolving market.

### **Accelerating Oman's Sustainable Ecosystem**

ACERE's strategic diversification into the Renewable Energy Division underscores its proactive role in Oman's sustainability agenda. This pioneering division within the group is designed to contribute to transforming Oman into a sustainable and eco-friendly state.

Highlighting the tremendous opportunities that are available in the renewable energy sector, he says, “I believe the future lies in integrated sustainable ecosystems—where energy, mobility, and infrastructure work in harmony. Our partnership with ABB to expand EV charging networks is a major step in supporting electric mobility adoption in Oman. We are also exploring solutions in green logistics, clean construction machinery, and circular economy practices. The goal is not just to participate in the sustainability transition—it is to accelerate it in a way that aligns with Oman Vision 2040 and empowers local talent and industries.”

This commitment to sustainability is not merely symbolic. Under Al Bahrani’s leadership, ACERE has established a dedicated Renewable Energy Division, opening doors to cutting-edge electric vehicle technologies, charging infrastructure, and sustainable transportation solutions. By embracing e-mobility, ACERE is actively supporting Oman’s transition to eco-friendly transportation options.

### **Transformative Milestones**

Under Al Bahrani’s tenure, MHD ACERE has achieved several transformative milestones that reflect a deliberate strategy of diversification, innovation, and customer-centric value creation. Listing out the key measures, he explains, “We have strengthened our position in the automotive sector by introducing and elevating globally respected brands such as Jetour, Hongqi, Jeep, RAM, and Alfa Romeo, ensuring that customers in Oman have access to diverse, world-class mobility solutions.”

The expansion has not stopped there. ACERE has invested heavily in expanding its sales and after-sales network nationwide, enhancing accessibility, service reliability, and overall customer experience. This focused approach was spurred by market demands during the difficult pandemic period, which saw the company establish multiple sales facilities across Oman. While it led to substantial increase in after-sales facilities, it also underscored its commitment to customer convenience and accessibility. What is more, it generated employment opportunities, thereby contributing to the socio-economic develop-



**At ACERE, we encourage agility and forward thinking while staying rooted in purpose and integrity. Whether we are introducing new global automotive brands, expanding EV infrastructure, or scaling healthcare solutions, we ensure that every step forward strengthens our long-term commitment to Oman’s development and our customers’ confidence in us.**



ment of the nation.

Parallel to the automotive successes, ACERE launched HospiCare, a dedicated healthcare equipment division that provides hospitals and medical providers with advanced diagnostic and treatment technologies. “This contributes directly to Oman’s healthcare resilience and national well-being,” he adds.

He summarises this approach as follows: “Together, these milestones reflect a deliberate strategy of diversification, innovation, and customer-centric value creation, aligned closely with Oman’s development priorities and Vision 2040.”

### **Leadership Philosophy**

Frequently described as a ‘next-generation leader,’ Al Bahrani defines his leadership philosophy as rooted in clarity, empowerment, and accountability. “I believe in creating space for teams to think boldly, take ownership, and grow. Over the years, I have

learned that leadership is not only about making decisions - it’s about listening, trusting your people, and staying adaptable,” he explains.

“I try to lead with both strategic understanding and empathy, ensuring that progress is meaningful and sustainable,” Al Bahrani adds, emphasising the importance of human-centric leadership in today’s corporate environment. His approach reflects a modern understanding that leadership is less about hierarchical authority and more about enabling others to achieve their potential.

Al Bahrani’s leadership style is characterised by visionary thinking, environmental stewardship, a growth mindset, and the agility to overcome challenges. He has been instrumental in attracting globally renowned automotive brands, expanding dealership networks, and pioneering the renewable energy division at MHD.

### **The Future of Mobility**

With deep roots in the automotive industry, Al Bahrani is particularly enthusiastic about the transformation of mobility in Oman and the wider region. “I am particularly excited about the continued rise of electric and hybrid mobility, supported by strong charging infrastructure and energy-efficient ecosystems. We’re also seeing significant advancements in vehicle connectivity and intelligent driver-assistance systems, which are reshaping the way people experience safety, comfort, and convenience on the road,” he observes.

This transformation is regional and far-reaching. “Looking ahead, the shift toward smart, efficient, and environmentally responsible transportation will be a defining factor for our region. As these innovations evolve, they will not only transform mobility, but also open new opportunities for talent development, new industries, and sustainability-driven growth,” he adds.

### **Sports, Youth, and Leadership**

Al Bahrani’s interests extend beyond the boardroom. As Chairman of Al Amerat Sports and Cultural Club, he draws lessons from sports that inform his leadership style. “Sports teach discipline, teamwork, and resilience—values that translate directly into business leadership. At Al Am-



erat Club, I have seen how sports can inspire confidence, build community, and empower youth. This experience reinforces my belief in nurturing potential, celebrating effort, and building environments where people feel motivated to improve,” he says. His enthusiasm for motorsports also mirrors his professional philosophy. Drawing parallels between the track and the world of business, he states: “Motorsports is about precision, strategy, and managing pressure. On the track, every second counts, just as every decision counts in business. Both require preparation, adaptability, and courage to take calculated risks. You learn to

trust your team, your instincts, and your discipline—qualities that have shaped my leadership style significantly.”

#### **Private Sector’s Role in Vision 2040**

The role of the private sector in Oman’s economic diversification - a pillar of Vision 2040 - is crucial. Al Bahrani sees a critical role for the private sector and leaders like himself: “Vision 2040 calls for companies and leaders to think beyond traditional business goals. The private sector must champion innovation, develop local talent,

diversify the economy, and contribute to national resilience.”

He confirms that MHD ACERE’s strategic focus is intentionally tied to this national imperative. “At ACERE, our mandates in sustainable mobility, healthcare, and youth empowerment are directly aligned to this responsibility. Leadership today is measured not only in financial growth, but in impact,” he asserts.

#### **Career Challenges and Personal Motivation**

Reflecting on personal and professional turning points, Al Bahrani acknowl-

edges the challenges of taking on leadership responsibilities at a young age. “I learned that to lead effectively, you must listen deeply, act decisively, and adapt quickly. That period reinforced my belief that challenges are opportunities to redefine direction—not obstacles to success,” he says.

Motivated by a profound commitment to his country, he affirms his patriotic stance by stating, “I am driven by the desire to contribute positively to Oman—its youth, its industries, and its future.”

He defines the lasting mark he hopes to make as follows: “I hope my legacy reflects meaningful progress: stronger institutions, empowered young leaders, and a culture that values innovation with purpose. Ultimately, I want to leave behind pathways for others to rise and lead with confidence.”

### Career Trajectory

Al Bahrani began his career at MHD LLC as Director of the Automotive Business, a pivotal division within the company. Within a year, he was promoted to CEO - a move reflecting both personal achievement and the strategic alignment of the company’s growth objectives. This career trajectory represents a decisive moment in the company’s history, positioning MHD to continue its legacy and significantly shape the future of Oman’s business landscape.

Under his leadership, MHD ACERE has introduced and promoted over 150 automotive brands, including McLaren, Jaguar Land Rover, MG Motor, Hongqi, Jeep, RAM, and Alfa Romeo. This growth stems from the CEO’s steadfast commitment to the automotive sector, and the drive to bring cutting-edge brands to Omani consumers.

### Expansion and Diversification

ACERE’s growth strategy extends beyond automotive. The establishment of MHD Leasing for the tourism industry, along with ventures into healthcare through partnerships with Spark Meditech, Comen, Schrack Seconet AG, FUJIFILM, and Sonosite, underscores the company’s commitment to diversification. It underscores the larger objective of actively contributing to Oman’s economic development and diversification.

The company’s renewable energy di-

vision exemplifies its forward-thinking approach. By introducing electric vehicle technologies and infrastructure, ACERE demonstrates a proactive commitment to clean energy, aligning with global trends and Omani Vision 2040.

### Shaping Oman’s Future

Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani embodies the synthesis of tradition, innovation, and leadership. Under his guidance, MHD ACERE has not only strengthened its position as a diversified business leader but also actively contributed to Oman’s economic and social progress. From introducing premium automotive brands and expanding healthcare solutions to pioneering re-

newable energy initiatives, Al Bahrani demonstrates that business leadership today requires both vision and responsibility. The combination of strategic foresight, operational excellence, and personal passion for innovation has positioned MHD ACERE as a leading force in Oman’s business landscape. Al Bahrani’s vision continues to shape the company’s trajectory, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of mobility, sustainability, and community development.

As Oman strides confidently toward Vision 2040, leaders like Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani exemplify how purpose-driven business can leave a lasting impact, not just on markets, but on communities and the nation as a whole.



# Ibtisam Al-Khaifi: Shaping Human-Centric Transformation in Oman's Corporate Landscape

---

Amid Oman's growing focus on corporate transformation and human capital development, one leader has distinguished herself through a uniquely human-centred approach — Ibtisam Al-Khaifi, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Simat Management Consulting.

“

In any corporate world or business environment, there are always so many narratives around you — everyone has something to say. But a successful leader really needs to focus on his or her own story — the story you want to tell, the story you want to build. When you remove all the noise and stay focused on your goal, that's what will make you successful at the end of the tunnel.

”



Ibitsam Al-Khaifi



**A**s a key figure shaping the human capital landscape in the Sultanate, Ibtisam Al-Khaifi's philosophy is elegantly simple: "Grow people, grow your business."

Blending business strategy with behavioural science, she has carved a niche for Simat as one of the Sultanate's most innovative and trusted consultancies, guiding organisations through change by putting people — their mindsets, motivations, and behaviours — at the heart of transformation. Her move from a corporate career to founding Simat was driven by a powerful observation: the persistent gap between strategy and execution.

"I noticed a clear gap. While systems and frameworks were well established,

there was limited emphasis on behavioural and human-based solutions. The human-centred side of transformation — focusing on mindsets, attitudes, and self-development — was often missing. I wanted to address that gap," she states.

This insight led to the creation of a consulting model rooted in human-centric solutions. As Ibtisam notes, "At Simat, we always put the human at the heart of what we do and make sure any solution we design take into account how people think, how people behave and how they feel also. And this was a missing puzzle in the business world."

Today, six years later, Simat is a recognised and trusted leader in human development, working with niche in-

dustries across the Sultanate and expanding their reach into Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

### **The Core Vision**

Simat's core vision is to become the leading consulting firm in human capital development. "In simple words, I would say 'grow people, grow your business'. That's our core vision. When we transform people, we are able to actually transform organisation," states Ibtisam, pointing out that it is not limited to soft skills or behavioural change. "We believe in strong systems, analytics, and processes. You need technology and structure as enablers. Transformation happens when people practices and processes complement

each other,” she adds

Simat’s evolution has mirrored this holistic vision. What began as a consultancy supporting HR functions has expanded into strategic leadership empowerment, helping executives build agile, high-performing workforces and sustainable talent pipelines. “It became more meaningful to what the market needs and what these CEOs, executives want to see their workforce look like,” she explains.

### **Building High-Performance Cultures**

While Ibtisam has, time and again, underscored the importance of human capital in business success, she admits that managing human capital can be a tricky topic in the business world. For, she says, “It’s not as easy as saying one plus one equals two. A number of concepts and practices might contradict business needs or practices might contradict what works with humans,” she maintains.

She describes a high-performing work culture as a blend of art and a science — a balance of clarity, accountability, and empowerment. “I think what creates a good high performing culture is first of all, your alignment within the organisation. This alignment comes only from clarity - your vision, where you are heading, your values, your standards, your code of conduct, what you accept, what you don’t. Your future aspirations,” she explains. She emphasises that alignment cannot exist without transparent communication and clear frameworks. “No matter how inspiring your values are, they must be supported by systems and processes that make them actionable,” she says.

Explaining further, she adds: “You need clear framework and strong governance that empower rather than restrict; a flexible foundation that allows culture to flow.” For Ibtisam, collaboration, innovation, and trust are cornerstones of this foundation. “You must create teams that break silos, communicate openly, and innovate together...and technology today is a great enabler for this,” she opines.

### **The Psychology Behind Leadership**

Although her business experience is deeply rooted in corporate and human



“

**I think what creates a good high performing culture is, first of all, your alignment within the organisation. This alignment comes only from clarity - your vision, where you are heading, your values, your standards, your code of conduct, what you accept, what you don’t. Your future aspirations.**

capital practice, Ibtisam’s academic background in psychology remains a defining influence on her leadership philosophy. “I have studied psychology and continued my higher education in organisational psychology. But what we do at Simat now extends beyond traditional psychology — we call it ‘human science’,” she states.

“We draw from proven human science research — tested principles of behaviour, motivation, and mindset — and apply them to business. This is what makes our programmes so impactful,” she adds.

Her leadership development frameworks emphasise self-awareness and emotional intelligence as the foundation of effective leadership. “A leader must first lead themselves before they can lead teams or organisations. That requires understanding one’s behaviour’s, emotions, and strengths,” she notes.

Simat’s leadership interventions often run for one to three years and include self-assessments - 360 assessment, specialised modules in strategy

and innovation, individual coaching, and mindset transformation. The results, she notes, are measurable in terms of business impact: “We have seen improvements in strategic thinking, collaboration, engagement, and overall team performance. When leaders grow, organisations grow.”

### **Navigating Change and Human Resistance**

In today’s fast-paced business environment, organisational change is

inevitable; yet, it is rarely easy. “Most people understand or have the intellectual capability to understand the importance of change. But the resistance comes from a natural human reaction to any change. People default to what it’s familiar and it takes time for their logical mind to catch up with their emotional mind. And this gap between the logical and emotional creates the resistance, creates the delay. And some people feel emotionally fatigued during this time because of the long transformation cycles that are

repeated also on these organisations,” she explains.

At Simat, the team helps leaders bridge this gap through assessments and targeted behavioural interventions. “We separate the technical from the behavioural. You can implement new systems or structures, but without emotional adaptability, change won’t last,” she says.

The secret, as Ibtisam notes, lies in consistency and communication. “Transformation takes time — often one to two years for small to medium



organizations, and longer for larger ones. It must be a continuous effort with clear, honest communication at every level," she stresses.

### **Empowering Omani Talent for Vision 2040**

As Oman advances towards Vision 2040, Ibtisam sees tremendous potential in the nation's workforce. Her experience working with leading companies in oil and gas, banking, telecommunication and government sectors has given her unique insight into the evolving character of Omani talent.

"Omani professionals today are globally connected, digitally fluent, and deeply committed to national impact. The conversation has shifted from localisation to empowerment — it's about how we develop and enable our people to lead innovation and compete globally," she maintains.

Simat has actively contributed to national human capital initiatives, including large-scale assessments and leadership development programmes. One example is a project with the Ministry of Manpower, where Simat assessed over 3,000 job seekers and helped train 600 selected candidates for employability. "We conducted behavioural and technical assessments to ensure the right investments were made in the right people," she explains, pointing out the intent to build a workforce that's future-ready.

In collaboration with the Oman Investment Authority and a local consulting firm, Simat is also leading an initiative to prepare the CFOs of the future, combining behavioural science and technical skills over a structured three-year development programme. "We want to help shape leaders who can take Oman confidently into the next decades," she says with pride.

### **Resilience and the Journey of an Entrepreneur**

As a successful Omani woman entrepreneur, Ibtisam's journey is a testament to resilience, especially having launched her firm just eight months before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When COVID hit, I had two options: go back to corporate comfort or move forward despite uncertainty. I chose to move forward. I told myself, if I survive this, everything else will be easier," she recalls.

That resilience, she says, came from a clear vision. "I knew the impact I wanted Simat to have. That vision became my anchor. Six years later, I can proudly say much of that vision has been realised," she says.

Along the way, she mastered not just leadership, but the technical and operational aspects of running a business — from finance to partnerships and contracts. Describing it as a humbling journey, she states: "What it taught me is to learn and acknowledge that while learning we will be failing. But we still have to move forward... Be consistent. The only way to make a business is to stay in the business - be consistent and embrace vulnerability. True power comes from admitting your weaknesses."

Her approach to leadership is also shaped by her desire for balance — between professional purpose and personal fulfilment. "When I started Simat, one of my goals was to create a better work-life balance. I wanted to build a life where I could lead meaningfully and still be present for my family," she shares.

She acknowledges that the balance isn't perfect, but it's intentional. "Some days, one side suffers. But when you look at the bigger picture and feel content with your life's direction — that's success," she says.

### **Inspiration Rooted in Heritage**

Much of Ibtisam's confidence and leadership ethos can be traced back to her family — particularly her grandmother and father. Her grandmother, she recalls, was a respected figure in her community, known for her wisdom and decisiveness.

"She would sit among men in the majlis, giving her opinions, making decisions. She was uneducated by formal standards but rich in wisdom and leadership," Ibtisam recalls fondly.

"When I once told her I was nervous about working in a male-dominated environment, she told me, 'The daughter of men, real men, should not fear men.' That line stayed with me forever," she states, reflectively.

Her father, a military man who rose through the ranks during Oman's early years of development, also left a lasting impression. "He started from nothing. Their generation struggled for basic needs. Watching his determination reminds me that I have no

reason to complain — only reasons to work harder," she shares.

### **Redefining Success**

For Ibtisam, true success in the business world is defined beyond the financial metrics of the P&L statement. "In business, we often talk about scalability - growth, expansion, profit. But to me, real success is when your impact scales, not just your numbers," she says, adding: "If everyone who crosses paths with my company — employees, partners, clients — benefits in some meaningful way, that's success."

She believes that success is also deeply personal — about alignment between purpose and fulfilment. "I want to live a life that I will look back on with satisfaction, knowing I built something that mattered while staying true to my values." Her message to aspiring entrepreneurs and young leaders is simple yet profound: "There will always be noise — different narratives, distractions, opinions. Focus on your story. Build the story you want to tell. Consistency and clarity will take you where you need to go."

### **The Future of Simat**

As she looks towards the future, Ibtisam's vision for Simat remains ambitious yet grounded. She sees the company expanding its footprint across the region while embracing technology and data-driven insights.

"We want to build a strong, confident talent pipeline; professionals who are technically skilled, emotionally intelligent, innovative, and globally competitive," she says, adding that her company's legacy is to be a catalyst for human capital development, one that empowers organisations by empowering people. Artificial intelligence and data analytics, she notes, will play a major role in Simat's next phase. "We aim to become more AI-enabled and data-driven, enhancing the reach and impact of our human development programmes," she adds.

Ibtisam's Simat Management Consulting is more than just a business advisor; it is an architect of potential, proving that by investing deeply in the human element - the mindset, the behaviour, and the individual journey - Oman's leaders can build a future workforce that is ready to compete on the world stage.

# Ahmed Al Ajmi: The Creative Heartbeat of Oman's Branding Landscape

---

In the dynamic landscape of the Middle East's business environment, a new wave of Omani leadership is emerging; one that champions authenticity, cultural insight, and cutting-edge strategy. At the forefront of this movement is Ahmed Ibrahim Al Ajmi, CEO of the pioneering boutique agency, THURAYAbiz.

“

Omani entrepreneurship is entering an exciting phase. We're witnessing a new generation of creative leaders who are confident, globally aware, and driven by innovation. The creative industry here is maturing, it's no longer about imitation but about creating original, culturally grounded ideas that resonate beyond borders. Oman has the talent and cultural depth to lead the region in authentic storytelling.

”



Ahmed Ibrahim Al Ajmi

**W**ith over two decades of experience, Ahmed Al Ajmi is not just a business leader, he is a branding consultant who has successfully merged culture and design thinking to drive success. His philosophy - that branding is about building emotional connections through creativity and cultural insight - has positioned THURAYAbiz not merely as a service provider, but as a genuine partner in transformation.

This commitment has earned him the distinction of becoming the first Omani to be certified as a Brand Specialist by Level C Brand, a globally recognised accreditation that cements his standing at the forefront of the regional branding landscape.

Founded in 2007, THURAYAbiz was born from a transformative vision: to redefine how brands communicate, connect, and ultimately, create impact. Ajmi recalls the foundational belief that set the agency on its unique trajectory. "From the beginning, we believed branding was more than design - it's about building emotional connections through culture and creativity," he states.

In a market often dominated by larger, mass-production-focused agencies, THURAYAbiz chose a different path, deliberately embracing the identity of a boutique agency. This choice is their greatest differentiator. It allows for a personalised approach, ensuring the team remains close to every single project, deeply blending strategy, cultural insight, and storytelling.

"Our size allows agility, our experience ensures precision, and our passion drives transformation," Ajmi notes, highlighting the unique value proposition. This tailored, high-touch model particularly benefits clients who seek a true partner - organisations that value collaboration, innovation, and authenticity over generic solutions. They are selective with their projects, ensuring every client receives the team's full creative and strategic attention.

### **Defining Success: Impact Over Scale**

For Ajmi, success in business is measured not by sheer scale, but by the depth of impact. "Success, to me, is not defined by scale but by impact," he clarifies, emphasising the "ability to create



Success, to me, is not defined by scale but by impact, the ability to create meaningful change for our clients, our people, and our community. A moment that truly reflects this was when we were recognized with various accolades. It validated our belief that strategic creativity, when aligned with cultural relevance, can reshape perceptions and drive measurable results.

meaningful change for our clients, our people, and our community.”

A pivotal moment that truly reflects this definition was the agency’s recognition with various industry accolades. These awards provided a crucial validation of their core philosophy: that strategic creativity, when meticulously aligned with cultural relevance, possesses the power to reshape market perceptions and drive measurable results.

This belief in the power of purposeful work underscores the evolution of the agency’s vision. What started as a goal to help brands build stronger, more relevant identities has blossomed into a regional ambition. Today, THURAYAbiz is focused on becoming “the creative heartbeat of the Middle East by 2029”. This vision extends far beyond traditional branding; it’s about building “ecosystems of innovation, strategy, and human-centric design that enable transformation at every level”.

“The journey has taught us that adaptability and purpose are key to long-term success,” he affirms.

### The Boutique Edge

In a competitive industry dominated by global networks and large agencies, THURAYAbiz boutique positioning offers a refreshing contrast. “Our boutique nature is our greatest strength. It allows us to provide deep engagement, flexibility, and tailored solutions that larger agencies often struggle to offer,” Ajmi says.

By being selective with projects, the agency ensures that every client receives complete creative and strategic dedication. “This approach particularly benefits clients who seek a partner, not just a service provider organisation that value collaboration, innovation, and authenticity over mass production,” he adds.

This personalised engagement has built long-term trust and loyalty, setting THURAYAbiz apart as a creative partner known for substance and soul.

### Leadership in Action

As CEO, Ajmi’s daily challenge is the delicate, yet crucial, balance between fostering unbridled creativity and ensuring sound business leadership. His approach is rooted in compassion, clarity, and trust.



“I see my role as enabling creativity within a strategic framework - giving our team the freedom to innovate, while ensuring every idea aligns with the client’s business objectives,” he explains. Leadership at THURAYAbiz is fundamentally about inspiring collaboration and nurturing a culture where groundbreaking ideas and flawless execution coexist seamlessly. Ajmi underscores that the agency’s success is a reflection of the “collective expertise and innovative spirit of our exceptional team”.

This internal culture of continuous development is also a reflection of his personal commitment to learning. His extensive qualifications, including the prestigious Level C certification, demonstrate his broad expertise in strategy development and brand implementation. This commitment to self-improvement is central to the powerful motivational message he shares with the next generation: ‘You

---

Blending culture, creativity, and strategy, Ahmed Al Ajmi, the first Omani certified as a Brand Specialist by Level C, has positioned THURAYAbiz as a boutique branding powerhouse, redefining success through impact, authenticity, and human-centric design across the Middle East.

are the maker of your own destiny’.

He emphasises that success is not an overnight event; “it’s built through persistence, learning, and passion”. His sessions for youth, such as his recent talk at the Youth Center, consistently stress the importance of continuous skill development, hard work, and dedication to self-improvement.

### **Balancing Creativity and Business**

Leading a creative enterprise requires more than strategic acumen — it demands empathy and an understanding of how to nurture creative talent. Ajmi embodies this balance gracefully.

“Balancing creativity with business leadership requires compassion, clarity, and trust. I see my role as enabling creativity within a strategic framework — giving our team the freedom to innovate while ensuring every idea aligns with the client’s business objectives,” he says.

Leadership at THURAYAbiz is about inspiring collaboration and nurturing a culture where ideas and execution coexist seamlessly.

### **Innovation and the Omani Spirit**

In an era defined by the rapid advancement of technology - from AI to new digital platforms - staying ‘forward-thinking’ is paramount. For THURAYAbiz, innovation is not about chasing fleeting trends; it’s about strategically merging technology with human insight to help clients remain agile and relevant.

“We embrace technology as a creative partner, not a threat,” Ajmi states. The agency’s teams continuously integrate AI, data analytics, and digital transformation tools to enhance both storytelling and data-driven decision-making.

“By merging technology with human insight, we help brands stay agile and relevant. For us, innovation isn’t about chasing trends, it’s about ensuring our clients are future-ready while remaining true to their identity,” he explains.

### **Creative Renaissance**

As Oman continues to assert itself on the regional stage, Ajmi sees the country’s creative sector entering a new era. “Omani entrepreneurship is entering

an exciting phase. We’re witnessing a new generation of creative leaders who are confident, globally aware, and driven by innovation,” he says.

He observes a shift in mindset — from imitation to originality. “The creative industry here is maturing, it’s no longer about imitation but about creating original, culturally grounded ideas that resonate beyond borders,” he notes.

Oman’s rich cultural heritage, combined with the energy of its youth, offers fertile ground for this transformation. “Oman has the talent and cultural depth to lead the region in authentic storytelling,” Ajmi affirms.

### **Message to the Next Generation**

For young entrepreneurs and aspiring creatives, Ajmi offers timeless wisdom rooted in his own journey. “Be curious, fearless, and authentic. The world rewards those who innovate, not imitate,” he advises.

He encourages persistence and self-belief as the cornerstones of success. “Every entrepreneur should remember that success doesn’t come overnight; it’s built through persistence, learning, and passion. Embrace challenges as part of growth, and never lose sight of the values that define you. Build something that not only generates profit but also inspires people and creates purpose,” he counsels.

### **A Legacy of Innovation and Transformation**

Since its inception, THURAYAbiz has built a reputation for pushing boundaries and redefining brand narratives. The agency’s approach integrates culture, creativity, and data-driven decision-making to deliver measurable impact. By combining strategy and storytelling, the company ensures that every project it undertakes resonates emotionally while achieving tangible business outcomes. This fusion of art and analytics has become the hallmark of THURAYAbiz’s success.

Ajmi’s over 20 plus years of experience in branding and marketing have given him a unique perspective on how design thinking can drive business transformation. “Our commitment to human-centric branding enables us to create not just logos or campaigns, but entire ecosystems of meaning,” he

explains.

Through strategic collaborations, regional partnerships, and a relentless focus on innovation, THURAYAbiz continues to help clients navigate change and seize opportunity — one brand story at a time.

### **Looking Ahead**

The future for THURAYAbiz is filled with promise. Ajmi and his team are actively expanding their regional presence, investing in digital transformation, and cultivating partnerships that will further strengthen their creative ecosystem.

“Our mission is to continue redefining branding through innovation, creativity, and impact. By 2029, we aim to firmly position THURAYAbiz as the region’s creative heartbeat — inspiring brands and shaping the future of communication across the Middle East,” he stresses.

The roadmap includes new ventures into digital experience design, cultural branding, and immersive storytelling — areas that bridge the gap between technology and emotion.

For Ajmi, this vision is not just about business growth; it’s about legacy. It is about building something that lasts — a company that inspires others, uplifts communities, and represents the creative spirit of Oman to the world.

### **The Man Behind the Brand**

Beyond his professional achievements, Ajmi is recognised for his humility, passion, and unwavering belief in the power of creativity to change lives. His journey from a young entrepreneur with a dream to a globally recognized brand leader embodies the spirit of perseverance and purpose.

He credits his inspiration to “people and culture” — the creative energy of his team, the trust of his clients, and the richness of Omani heritage. “These constantly remind me that creativity is both universal and deeply personal. Every story we tell at THURAYAbiz is shaped by the people who believe in transformation and the culture that grounds us,” he says.

His leadership style reflects that same blend of empathy and excellence. By fostering a culture of curiosity and collaboration, he continues to nurture the next generation of Omani creatives



— those who will carry forward the torch of innovation and authenticity.

### **A Legacy in the Making**

In less than two decades, THURAYAbiz has evolved from a small boutique agency into a beacon of creative excellence in Oman and beyond. Its success story is one of vision, adaptability, and relentless

passion — qualities embodied by its founder and CEO, Ahmed Al Ajmi.

Under his guidance, the agency has built not only brands but bridges — connecting culture with commerce, creativity with strategy, and Oman with the world.

As the company moves toward its 2029 goal of becoming the creative heartbeat of the Middle East, Ajmi remains steadfast in his mis-

sion: to prove that authenticity, innovation, and human connection will always be the cornerstones of powerful branding.

In a world clamouring for genuine connection, Ahmed Al Ajmi and THURAYAbiz are proving that the most successful business is one built on a foundation of cultural respect, human insight, and unwavering, purposeful creativity.

# Oman 2025: Building the Future, Living the Vision

---

The year 2025 marks a historic turning point, demonstrating Oman's unwavering commitment to a diversified, modern, and sustainable future.



**U**nder the strategic guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Sultanate made bold policy decisions - most significantly the introduction of a personal income tax - while its non-oil economy surged, earning high praise from international financial bodies. This period of robust growth and digital transformation was seamlessly integrated with its defining role as a crucial diplomatic anchor, confirming Oman's status as an architect of regional stability and prosperity, fully focused on the goals of Vision 2040.

### **A Historic Fiscal Leap: The Personal Income Tax**

In a move that reverberated across the Gulf region, Oman announced it would become the first GCC state to

introduce a personal income tax beginning in 2028. This is not merely a revenue-generating exercise; it's a profound symbolic statement about economic maturity and the commitment to fiscal sustainability, moving away from near-total reliance on hydrocarbon revenue. The tax, a modest 5 percent rate on taxable income for individuals earning over RO 42,000 (approx. \$109,000) annually, is set to affect only about 1 percent of the population.

### **Diversified Growth and Stable Inflation**

Oman recorded steady economic growth in the first half of 2025, largely driven by sturdy performance in non-oil sectors and a sharp rise in natural gas production, according to the Ministry of Economy's Economic Perfor-

mance Bulletin released in September.

The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current prices rose by 2.44 percent, reaching RO 20.66 billion, compared to RO 20.17 billion during the same period in 2024. In real terms, the economy expanded by 2.27 percent, fuelled primarily by a 4.14 percent increase in non-oil activities. Inflation remained subdued, averaging 0.82 percent between January and June 2025 - higher than the 0.36 percent recorded in the same period in 2024, but still within the government's targeted comfort zone.

### **Digital Tides and Infrastructure Megawatts**

Oman's drive toward a digitally-enabled society gained significant traction. Government entities launched critical new e-services, from a ful-





ly digitised commercial registry to streamlined digital building permits, vastly improving the ease of doing business and governance efficiency. In the transport sector, Oman Airports unveiled an innovative drive-through check-in service at Salalah Airport, symbolising a customer-centric approach to modernisation.

At LEAP 2025 in Riyadh, the Omani pavilion secured approximately \$12 million in tech deal interests, showcasing a burgeoning startup ecosystem. A major highlight was a \$10 million agreement between Omani firm Global Semiconductor & Microelectronics

(GSME) and a Saudi partner, focusing on semiconductors, electronics, and 3D computer vision solutions.

### **Construction and Infrastructure**

The construction industry in Oman is slated for significant expansion, projected to grow at an annual average rate of 4.4 percent from 2026 to 2029. This growth is underpinned by massive investment in key sectors: renewable energy, transport, and housing. Public expenditure is focused on strategic development, with the Ministry of Transport, Communications,

and Information Technology signing over RO 100 million in agreements for port, airport, and logistics zone construction.

In real estate, the market reflected a growing demand for luxury and sustainable living, exemplified by the record-breaking sale of a penthouse at The Arc in Yiti, for over RO 2 million. This strong investor confidence mirrors the national direction towards eco-urban initiatives like the Sustainable City Yiti, aligning infrastructure growth with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles.



### **Diplomacy, Trade, and Cultural Exchange**

In a testament to its pivotal role as a diplomatic bridge, Oman hosted high-level, sensitive nuclear talks between the US and Iran. This ability to provide a confidential, neutral space for dialogue is a priceless asset on the world stage, confirming the Sultanate's reputation as an indispensable facilitator of international stability.

Furthermore, Oman extended its commitments globally by participating in the launch of a declaration for the protection of humanitarian personnel at the UN General Assembly and for-

mally acceding to the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, demonstrating its dedication to both human and marine security.

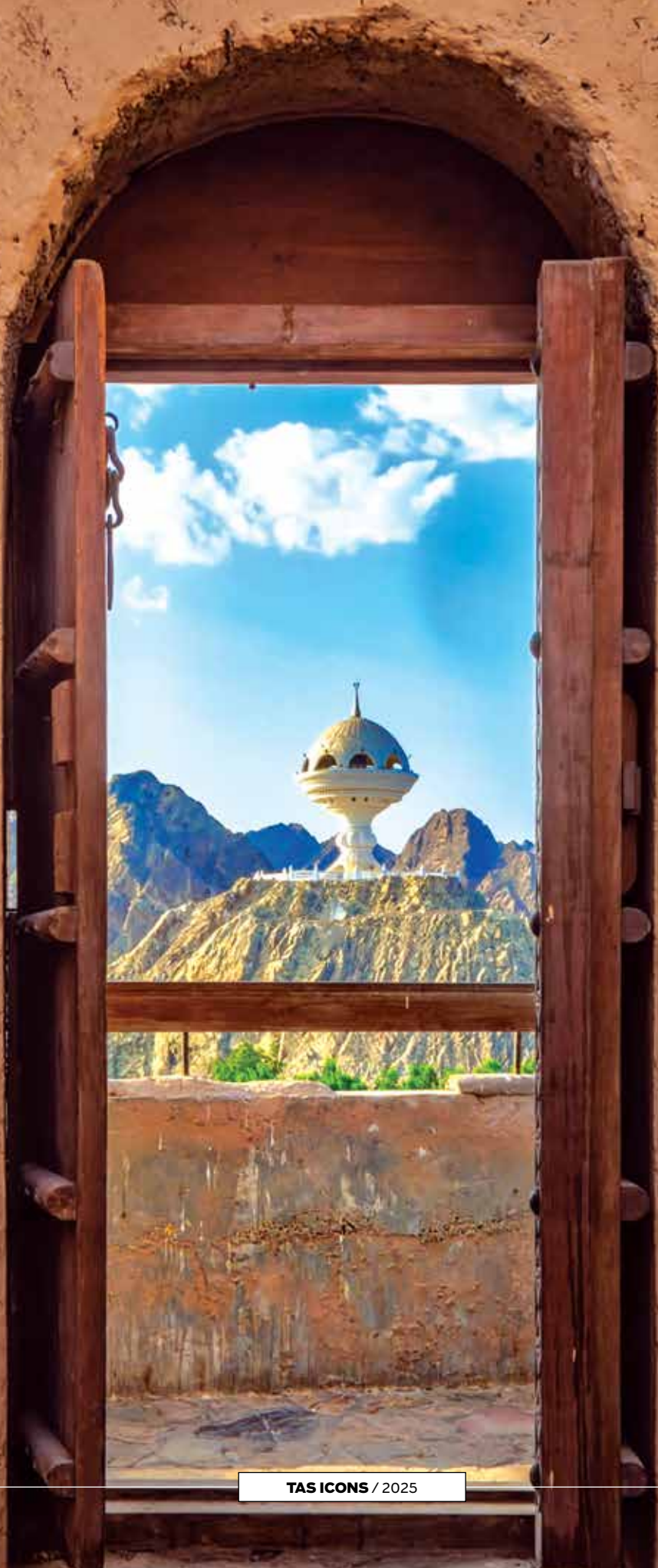
Just last month, October 20, 2025, to be specific, UN Secretary-General António Guterres thanked His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for Oman's mediation efforts that helped resolve the detention of UN personnel by Houthi authorities in Yemen.

### **Expanding Trade and Bilateral Ties**

The Sultanate established new trade ties and deepened existing ones with

several countries, most notably Iran, Russia, and Turkey, while also engaging with Qatar and Thailand to boost investment and cooperation. A major milestone was the ratification of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Iran, signed on May 27, 2025, aimed at enhancing market access and facilitating smoother trade flows. Oman also formed a joint committee with Russia to advance trade, economic, and technical cooperation, including the ratification of amendments to a 1994 agreement.

Relations with Turkey entered a new phase, underscored by a state visit from the Turkish President that



highlighted growing strategic and economic ties. Trade between the two nations reached RO 196.8 million in the first seven months of 2025, with both sides finalising new agreements to foster joint investment and commercial ventures.

Oman's outreach extended further, hosting a business forum with Qatar in October 2025 to facilitate business-to-business meetings and strengthen trade and investment links. Additionally, a Thai trade delegation visited Oman to explore opportunities in sectors such as food security, healthcare, perfumes, and cosmetics.

Trade ties were also strengthened with a key partner, as Oman and India moved closer to finalising a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). This agreement aims to diversify bilateral trade beyond the current heavy reliance on petroleum products, opening new avenues for goods and services exchange and building on the current \$10.61 billion trade volume.

### **Tourism, and a Sustainable Horizon**

The tourism sector is firmly in rebound, buoyed by the country's ambitious National Tourism Strategy 2040, which targets attracting 11 million tourists annually by that year, supported by an expected RO 20 billion in investment. The year saw a significant surge in air traffic during the famed Dhofar Khareef season, and new agreements, such as the deal to operate and manage Baraka Fort, highlighted the push to inte-

grate historical sites into the modern tourism framework. The hospitality sector alone is projected to grow at an impressive annual rate of 6.3 percent through 2026.

A report by Cavendish Maxwell indicated that Oman's tourism sector would expand, with 2,600 new hotel rooms scheduled for completion by the end of 2025.

### **Health, Safety, and the Green Transition**

The commitment to national well-being was institutionalised with the enactment of a new Public Health Law in April 2025, designed to strengthen national health security, enhance inter-agency cooperation, and improve community awareness. This was complemented by events like the Oman Health Expo 2025, which focused on the next frontier: digital health.

The dialogue on sustainability and energy reforms was front and centre at the Oman Petroleum & Energy Show (OPES) and Oman Sustainability Week 2025. The focus is on a balanced transition, with strategic legal and institutional reforms and incentives for renewable energy. The long-term plan is clear: raise the share of renewable energy in the electricity mix to 30 percent by 2030 and 70 percent by 2040, on the path to net zero emissions by 2050.

Clearly, Oman is not merely waiting for the future; it is strategically building it - a modern, diversified, and sustainable Sultanate poised to be a leading light in the Arabian region.

**Oman's tourism rebound is accelerating, driven by the National Tourism Strategy 2040, rising air traffic, renewed heritage-site initiatives, and strong hospitality growth.**

---

**Oman strengthened national well-being in 2025 with a new Public Health Law, major digital-health initiatives, and sustainability dialogues at OPES and Oman Sustainability Week—advancing energy reforms and long-term renewable targets toward a net-zero future.**





The  
**Arabian  
Stories**

**WITH UNITY  
AND PRIDE,**

**We Journey Towards  
a Brighter Future**



**Business Plus**  
REVIEW

[thearabianstories.com](http://thearabianstories.com)

Your story.  
Your Voice.  
Now in Arabic!

alsawtnews.com

powered by  
The Arabian  
Stories



الصوت

# HIGH-PERFORMANCE INTELLIGENT 7 SEATER FAMILY SUV

2026  
MY



**CS95 4WD** 2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp,  
8-speed AT, 4WD, 7 Seater  
Royal



CHANGAN  
**SUPER WARRANTY**  
6 YEARS OR  
250,000 KMS\*

**5<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OFFERS**

- FREE SERVICE**  
FROM 2 YEARS / 35,000 KMS  
AND 3 YEARS / 55,000 KMS\*
- FREE**  
INSURANCE@
- FREE**  
REGISTRATION\*
- VAT ( 5% )**  
ON US
- FREE GIFT**  
WINDOW TINTING\*\*

Terms and conditions apply. Offer valid from 20<sup>th</sup> October till 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025, purchased through the CHANGAN Showroom Retail Offer. \*Whichever is earlier. Periodic Maintenance Service only. Offer includes only 10,000 kms service intervals. @For 1<sup>st</sup> year, Oman & UAE only. \*\*For 1st year only. \*Whichever is earlier. Images shown are for illustrative purposes only. Specifications may vary as per the model variant. To know more, please visit the CHANGAN Showroom.