

O M A N عَمَان D A I L Y

# Observer



OMAN IN FOCUS:  
200 YEARS OF  
PHOTOGRAPHY



## INBRIEF

### HIS MAJESTY GETS MESSAGE FROM KOREAN PRESIDENT



HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, receives Kang Hoon-Sik on Thursday.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a written message from President Lee Jae-Myung of the Republic of Korea. The message was received on behalf of His Majesty the Sultan by HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, when he received on Thursday Kang Hoon-Sik, Chief of Staff to the President of the Republic of Korea and Envoy of the Korean President. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed areas of cooperation and partnership between the two countries across various economic and investment fields, as well as ways to develop them to serve mutual interests. The meeting was attended by Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Economic Adviser at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, and Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al Hinai, Ambassador-at-Large at the Foreign Ministry. — ONA

### LOW PRESSURE BRINGS RAINS IN GOVERNORATES

The Oman Meteorology Office said thunderstorms, dust storms and active winds are likely to affect several governorates. According to the latest update, thunderstorms are expected to impact parts of the governorates of Al Buraimi, Al Dakhiliyah, Al Dhahirah, Al Batinah South, Al Batinah North, Al Sharqiyah North, and Muscat. The alert, classified as limited in intensity, indicates chances of rainfall accompanied by cloud activity. The Met Office warned of dust storms over desert areas. The alert carries a moderate impact level, with reduced visibility expected in open and desert areas.

### READY TO END MOON MISSION



Seen from behind the Moon during Artemis II, the Moon and Earth align in the same frame, each partially illuminated by the Sun, photographed by the Nasa Artemis II crew from the Orion spacecraft during the lunar flyby mission. Four astronauts travelling back to Earth from the far side of the moon on Artemis II mission spoke of their emotions as they wrapped up the unprecedented flight and prepared to re-enter the atmosphere in a 'fireball', during their first press conference from space. — AFP

## His Majesty, Macron discuss regional situation

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Thursday received a phone call from President Emmanuel Macron of the French Republic.

During the call, the two leaders reviewed the latest developments in the region within the context of the announced ceasefire.

His Majesty the Sultan and the French President emphasised the importance of consolidating and building upon this approach, while continuing international efforts to address the root causes of the conflict to contribute to strengthening security and stability at both regional and international levels.

On another note, the French President expressed his deep thanks and appreciation to His Majesty the Sultan for the efforts recently exerted by the Sultanate of Oman in securing the release of French citizens detained in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He commended His Majesty's constructive and active role in supporting de-escalation efforts, as well as peaceful and diplomatic solutions. — ONA



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik



President Emmanuel Macron

## Israeli strikes on Lebanon threaten US-Iran ceasefire

Islamabad locked down for war's first peace talks

**ISRAEL** bombed more targets in Lebanon on Thursday, putting the US-Iran ceasefire into further jeopardy after the biggest Israeli attacks on its neighbour of the war killed more than 250 people and threatened to torpedo Donald Trump's truce.

In Pakistan, authorities locked down the capital Islamabad in anticipation of the war's first peace talks. Access was blocked from a zone 3 km around the luxury Serena Hotel, where both the US and Iranian delegations are expected to stay. Guests were told to check out until Sunday as it had been "requisitioned" for "an important event".

But there was no sign Iran was lifting its near-total blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which has caused the worst disruption to global energy supplies in history. Tehran said there would be no deal as long as Israel was striking Lebanon.

In the first 24 hours of the ceasefire, just a single oil products tanker and five dry bulk carriers sailed through a strait that typically accommodated 140 ships a day before the war.

Israel, which invaded Lebanon last month in parallel with the war on Iran to root out the Hezbollah, says its actions there are not covered by the ceasefire announced late on Tuesday by Trump.

Washington has also said Lebanon is not covered by the truce, but Iran and Pakistan, which acted as mediator, say it was explicitly part of the deal. A host of countries, including Britain and France, said the truce should extend to Lebanon.

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, expected to head the Iranian delegation opposite US Vice-President J D Vance, tweeted that Lebanon and the rest of Iran's 'axis' of regional allies were inseparable parts of any ceasefire.

A Pakistani source said Pakistan was working on ceasefires for Lebanon as well as Yemen, where Israel has also hit forces: "It will be discussed during the (upcoming)



An Iranian woman attends a ceremony marking 40 days since the late Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in Israeli and US strikes, in Tehran, Iran, on Thursday. — Reuters

talks and we will settle it."

The Israeli military said it had killed the nephew of Hezbollah's Secretary-General Naim Qassem and struck river crossings in southern Lebanon overnight. Israel hit Beirut's southern suburbs just before midnight and at dawn, and hit towns across the south on Thursday morning, Lebanese state media said.

Israel expanded its evacuation orders for areas on Beirut's outskirts, telling residents in the Jnah district to leave immediately. Orders also covered areas near Beirut airport and the Camille Chamoun stadium, Lebanon's largest, now converted into a shelter for the displaced. Hezbollah announced at least 20 military operations on Thursday, saying it had targeted Israeli

vehicles on Lebanese territory as well as firing into northern Israel.

#### DIRECT TALKS

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday he ordered his cabinet to open direct talks with Lebanon to disarm Hezbollah and establish "peace relations" between the two countries.

"In light of Lebanon's repeated requests to open direct negotiations with Israel, I instructed the cabinet yesterday to begin direct negotiations with Lebanon as soon as possible," his office wrote in a statement.

Israeli media outlets reported that Yeichiel Leiter, Israel's ambassador to the US, would represent the country in the talks.

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# ART/LIFE

AS PART OF  
THE **FRENCH**  
**WEEKS 2026**,  
THE EXHIBITION  
IS A UNIQUE  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO EXPLORE THE  
EVOLUTION OF  
THIS ART IN OMAN  
THROUGH THE  
LENSES OF OMANI  
AND FRENCH  
PHOTOGRAPHERS

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

**MARKING** 200 years since the invention of photography by French engineer Nicéphore Niépce, a new exhibition in Muscat brings together Omani and French artists in a cultural collaboration reflecting both history and contemporary practice.

Opening on April 15, at Stal Gallery, the exhibition is organised by the French Embassy to Oman in collaboration with Stal Gallery as part of the eighth edition of the French Weeks programme. The inauguration take place at 7 pm under the auspices of Dr Abdul Monem bin Mansour al Hassani.

The opening will be attended by Nabil Hajlaoui, alongside Luciano Rispoli, Sophie Villeret and Juliette Yon of the French Embassy, as well as Hassan Al Meer and Volodymyra Sobolevska of Stal Gallery.

Nabil Hajlaoui, Ambassador of France in Oman, said, "The French Embassy to Oman and the Stal Gallery are coming together to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the invention of photography by French engineer Nicéphore Niépce. As part of the French Weeks 2026, the exhibition is a unique opportunity to explore the evolution of this art in Oman through the lenses of Omani and French photographers, but also through innovative and inclusive ways to imagine photography."

"Some of the artists we present create photographic artworks AI-based or artworks to be experienced by both sighted and visually impaired audiences. We are proud to showcase historical and contemporary works made by these talented artists. Photography has been and remains one of the cornerstones of Omani-French cultural cooperation."

The exhibition features French photographer Emmy Culianeaz alongside Omani photographers Hassan al Meer, Anwar Sonya and Qasim al Farsi, as well as emerging photographers Eman Ali, Abdulaziz al Hosni, Sard Visual, Waheeb al Wahaibi, Mahmood al Zadjali, Ahmed al Toqi and Ahmed al Hosni.

A highlight is Anwar Sonya's collection, 'The Journey across Oman (1970 - 2008)', documenting decades of travel across Oman.

"Anwar Sonya's photography collection is dedicated to the many years of journeys made by Anwar across Oman, reflecting the natural, cultural, and social diversity in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, Salalah, Sur, Musandam, Wadi Al Alia, Muscat, Al Seeb, Bahla, Nizwa, Yiti, Muttrah and Wadi Al Kabir. Through these photographs, Oman is revealed as a space of continuous movement in time - from traditional ways of life to modern development, from



*Tabseel season in Sur Mibam 2020 by Qasim al Farsi*

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old roads and settlements to new cities and infrastructure," said Volodymyra.

"The Sonya's photography also shows the evolution of photography itself: 1980s - sepia-toned photographs reflecting the atmosphere of old Oman; 1990s - colour film photography representing a period of active change; 2000-2008 - photography capturing contemporary life" - she added. The exhibition also includes early photography by Hassan al Meer from the late 1980s.

"Through my lens, I was observing a society in transition, where people, places, and traditions were slowly changing. These images reflect how I perceived those subtle transformations and the quiet dialogue between human presence and the land," Hassan al Meer said.

Qasim al Farsi, a Drone Photo Awards 2021 winner, and who is affiliated with Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP) and the Photography Society of Oman, presents aerial photography 'The dream football playground in Sur (2022)' and 'Wadi Ghul Al Hamra (2019)'.

French photographer Emmy Culianeaz presents photographs by both sighted and visually impaired audiences.

"Each photograph is accompanied by complementary elements - such as descriptions, narratives, or sensory components - allowing

different ways of approaching the image. Created in the context of the bicentenary of photography, my project questions the idea of inclusion and explores how photography can be shared beyond vision alone. The exhibition invites visitors to experience images not only by seeing them, but also by imagining, listening, and feeling them," said Emmy Culianeaz.

Featuring emerging Omani photographers such as Eman Ali, Abdulaziz al Hosni, Sard Visual, Waheeb al Wahaibi, Mahmood al Zadjali, Ahmed al Toqi and Ahmed al Hosni, the exhibition brings together diverse practices, including iPhone and AI photography, that reflect contemporary social, cultural and artistic transformations.

"Stal Gallery actively contributes to the arts and cultural sector by supporting non-profit initiatives, providing resources and sponsorship, and engaging with creative communities as part of its broader commitment to corporate social responsibility. The Gallery is a pivotal platform for cultural diplomacy, providing unique opportunities for international art events, particularly the French Weeks programme," said Volodymyra.

During the exhibition, Stal Gallery offers guided educational tours for schools, colleges, universities, and tourist groups, including adapted tours for visually impaired visitors.

