The taxi snakes uphill beneath dark clouds pregnant with rain. I can still feel the unrelenting heat of Nizwa’s Arabian sun on my skin, so I hardly believe my eyes when fat drops start blotching the windshield. That was how Misfat Al Abriyeen welcomed us.

The 200-year-old village lies 1,000km above sea level, 40km south-west of Nizwa in Oman.

Continued on D8
A small harem in the 17th-century Misfate Al Abriyeen draws its life and fortune among the farmers. It is owned by the Al Abri family. It was in mud houses among the greenery. Modern industrial farms - or valleys - free from grazing freely in wadis - have been born. Instead of haggling, buyers would bid from an auction. Instead of haggling, buyers would bid in an auction. The holes above doorways of the 17th-century Fort are used as a curing agent in leather. The holes above doorways of the 17th-century Fort are used as a curing agent in leather.