NOVEMBER 5th

Royal address:
Inspiring & Motivating
"The building of the Omani nation, the shaping of their character through education and culture, with training and with qualifications, is in the forefront of our noble cause, for which we shall always strive."

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said

We salute the visionary leadership of

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said

and extend our sincerest greetings to the people of Oman on the occasion of our 44th National Day.

Proudly following his vision of a vibrant future for the nation and its people, the OMZEST Group of Companies reiterates its commitment of contributing towards the progress of the Sultanate of Oman.
Felicitations & Sincere wishes to
His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said
and the people of Oman on the occasion of 44th National Day

Clean. Reliable. Sustainable.
ACWA Power Barka SAOG, an Omani Public Joint Stock Company, is a 456MW gas fired power plant and 30MIGD (including 10MIGD SWRO) desalination plant which is situated on the coast near Barka.

After more than 12 years of reliable, top notch performance due to our extensive operational experience, we are recognized as a leader in almost every aspect of the business.

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• 2012 – Share split: Over 100% positive impact reflecting investor confidence
• 2012 – 10 MIGD Sea Water Reverse Osmosis Expansion Project
• 2012 – Middle East Power Deal of the Year 2012 award by Euromoney
• 2014 – 12 Years without Lost Time Accident

Barka Power Generation & Water Desalination Plant
Hay Asem, Wilayat Barka, P.O. Box: 572, P.C.: 320, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 2689 4382, Fax: +968 26894387, www.acwapower.com
Business Opportunities
Forum records over RO 44 million worth of contracts in two days

People’s Leader

In search of Better Ties

Pondering Possibilities
Natural Pure Water from underground reservoir…
Products in various sizes …

Barzman water is a Natural Water
It was formed thousands of years ago as an underground reservoir when rain water was filtering through earth pores to form the natural reservoir. We are proud at Barzman that our water does not come from desalinated sea water. It comes from a natural source that has a distinctive taste and natural composition of minerals.

برزمان الوطنية ش.م.م
BARZMAN NATIONAL L.L.C.
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 info@barzmanwater.com  ☎ +968 2454 1135  ☎️ +968 2454 2236
On the wake of our dear country’s celebrations marking the Glorious National Day, we are honored to extend our most heartfelt congratulations and blessings to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, praying to Almighty Allah to safeguard His Majesty, grant him good health, happiness and long life and for the return of this and similar occasions on His Majesty for many years to come and preserve him for Oman as a symbol of pride and glory for the loyal citizens of this country.

The Royal vision envisaged and ordained by His Majesty to sustain development of the Omani economy has been well-defined and objective-oriented since the very beginning of the blessed renaissance years. This insightful vision is effectively backed by a sound strategic plan aimed at maintaining optimum utilization of the country’s abundant wealth, expanding and diversifying a broad base of production, strengthening the private sector’s role, developing the country’s infrastructures and establishing the pillars of a modern state. The vision’s ultimate goal is to further improve quality of life for Omanis and strengthen other components of development which is the main focus of the five-year plan. The achievements made so far in this respect stand out in testament of the outcome of that vision which could achieve the aspirations of the Omani people in progress with Oman now having a prestigious profile and standing at par with other advanced countries.

Our wise government has laid the foundation for the private sector to emerge as a main contributor to the country’s comprehensive development. It is now the duty of those in charge of the private sector organizations to be fully aware of the significance of doing their part, each in their area of business, in order to better serve this nation which has given us so much of its fortunes. There being no time to waste, we should now and always join our ranks and efforts to enable the private sector to play a pivotal role in the country’s development drive. By so doing, we can, with the help of God and with our own resolve, make this come true in the near future.
Felicitations & Sincere wishes to
His Majesty
Sultan Qaboos Bin Said
and the people of Oman
on the occasion of
44th National Day

شركة اتحاد المقاولين العمانيّة ش.م.م
CONSOLIDATED CONTRACTORS CO. OMAN L.L.C
P.O.Box: 614, Postal Code: 100, Sultanate of Oman, Tel.: +968 24774774
Fax: +968 24774773, Email: cccmct@omantel.net.om, Web: www.ccc.gr
"In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Peace be upon the Almighty’s Messenger, Prophet Mohammed, and upon his family, companions and those who pursue the righteous path of faith until the Day of Judgment.

Dear Citizens, it is our pleasure to greet you while our dear homeland is, on these blessed days, about to celebrate the 44th anniversary of its Triumphant Renaissance which is progressing in accordance with the firm foundations and pillars that we have laid down, right from the first day of the blessed march.

“We offer thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the guidance and virtues with which He has endowed us so that we could take this march forward for the building of a modern, well-founded state, advancing in full determination towards a bright future that is promising of progress and prosperity.

We are delighted to express our congratulations to you all on this happy occasion, which, this year, it has been the Almighty’s divine will that the anniversary coincides with the time when we are abroad - for reasons you know. Praise be to the Almighty, for He has realised for us good results that require us to proceed with the medical programme in the forthcoming period.

We would like to express our profound delight and extreme thanks to you for the heartfelt prayers and sincere sentiments which you have demonstrated. We pray to the Almighty Allah to protect all the loyal citizens of Oman and guard you all under His divine care, as noble and as loyal as you have always been.

We would also like to salute our courageous Armed Forces - with all its formations and in all gorges of the dear homeland - for their commendable national role which has always earned our full appreciation.

We reaffirm our continuous will to provide the Armed Forces with all equipment to enable them to perform their sacred duty of defending the territories of the nation and safeguarding its achievements.

We pray to Allah, the Almighty, to lend us His assistance and support us with success in all that serves the progress and prosperity of Oman!"
The Sultanate is being crowned these days by the achievements of 44 years that emerged this time in concurrence with the Royal appearance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, May Allah preserve and protect him. Celebrations set off in each and every corner of the nation with the loyal Omani people getting reassured of his health condition through the address His Majesty made to the nation from the Federal Republic of Germany.

The appearance of His Majesty was a great source of relief and happiness for the people of Oman and epitomized the utmost love, loyalty and gratitude the Omani people accord to the builder of their blessed contemporary renaissance. National processions and demonstrations that roamed the entire country featured the depth of relationship that has existed and continues to exist between a leader and his people. They obviously reflect the outcome of the strong and deep bond that has been instilled by His Majesty the Sultan over the past 44 years. In his Royal address, His Majesty expressed his overwhelming pleasure and thankfulness to the faithful sentiments demonstrated by the loyal sons of the nation and their sincere prayers for his speedy recovery.

The principles, policies and plans established by His Majesty have always meant to rally all the nation's energies and take advantage of the people's capabilities in order to achieve the highest degree of integration and coordination among various institutions of the modern state with the ultimate goal of realizing the set national objectives, foremost of which are the progress and prosperity of the nation and citizens, as well as providing decent life for all.

Omanis, the motivating force

Going back to the very beginnings when the development marches set off, we find that development in its very essence targeted the building of Omani citizen who is the cornerstone and motivating force at all levels and spheres. The deep trust and persistent and continuing care of the people by the leader of the development drive, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, May Allah preserve and protect, were the core pillars of national development. People have always been under the focal attention of the wise leadership providing them with the opportunities of further development and promotion enabling them to shoulder their responsibilities as partners in formulating and implementing national development programs for a better life in all fields. Training plans were devised and implemented in order to prepare competent cadres capable of shoudering their responsibility in continuation of the building and growth drive, particularly in the Private Sector, through SMEs (SMEs).
Developing National Income Sources
Developing all fields of science, knowledge, economy and society
Increasing and expanding agricultural, industrial and tourism potential
Adopting entrepreneurship and creating SMEs

Since he took over the reins of the country in July 1970, His Majesty has been keen on establishing a contemporary nation by developing all fields of science, knowledge, economy and society and pursuing integrated policies and ambitious plans for the attainment of sustainable development coupled with a set of objectives, foremost of which, are developed national income sources, increased and expanded agricultural, industrial and tourist productivity, curtailed dependence on oil revenues and further employment and training opportunities for Omanis. The plans also include encouragement of national cadres to involve in all spheres of the private sector and adoption of entrepreneurship and creation of SMEs owned by motivated young entrepreneurs for the promotion of self-employment concept. SMEs are a very important source of income in support of the national economic growth and play a vital role in activating production and service sectors increasing their contribution to the country’s overall development. This trend is implementable by providing a motivational investment environment, granting of facilities, incentives and assistance in kind as well as streamlining of procedures and setting up new industrial estates. Through the partnership between the Private and Government Sectors, the focus must be directed to setting up large manufacturing units having value added to the economy in terms of generated income and employment opportunities.

Supporting stabilized economic growth
Increase of government expenditure
Continuing to develop and uplift efficiency of public services
Completing and developing infrastructure

Many achievements were effectively attained in 2014. These included stabilized economic growth by increasing government expenditure and continued increase of efficiency of the public services provided to the citizens. Continuing infrastructural and planning activities in various governorates to enable them to execute development projects intended for citizens’ comfort, and uplift efficiency of various services in the sectors of health, agriculture, fisheries, regional municipalities, water resources, culture and heritage, housing, transport and communications, road and lighting services, wastewater stations and other developmental projects and plans.

Oman 2040: Vision for a bright future

With a view to envisaging a clear vision and paving the way for plans to be achieved for a brighter future, the main committee of Oman Way Ahead Vision 2040 was set up. The committee's plans are based on identifying available opportunities and optimally utilizing the economic advantages and available resources in order to sustain diversified income sources, expand self-employment enterprises and develop various governorates to commensurate with the size, nature and requirements of each governorate.
Safe Investment Destination

Railroad network
Developing Muscat International Airport and Salalah International Airport

The endeavors of both the private and government sectors are ongoing to attract and encourage foreign capitals to invest in various vital production areas such as tourism, construction, building, urbanization and transport, with the latter being developed by government, particularly through the railroad network which will serve as a new tributary of the national economy. Plans are also underway to develop Muscat International Airport and Salalah International Airport. All these sectors will undoubtedly have active roles and direct bearing on developing the strategies aimed at diversifying the economy, increasing the rates of trade exchange in the region, utilizing the investment opportunities available in many fields and introducing them and their investment and economic advantages. These opportunities are unique and characteristic of the Sultanate of Oman which now serves as an open hub for attraction of investments and local and foreign capitals through the privileges, incentives and facilities it provides for intended projects.

OCCI’s role as an economic entity seeking investment partnerships

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has played a significant role in bringing about investment partnerships by receiving many trade delegations from various countries of the world and holding economic seminars and conferences aimed at attracting and encouraging businessmen and businesswomen to set up investment partnerships with their Omani counterparts. OCCI has also dispatched delegations to various countries to highlight the Sultanate’s state-of-the-art infrastructure and its capabilities in the provision of services to the existing and future investments and to familiarize foreign businessmen with the plans set for developing some sectors such as ports and industrial estates to better serve the expectations of Omani and foreign companies. OCCI also continues its efforts to strengthen competitiveness of Omani products in world markets by organizing, participating in and supporting national exhibitions.
Warmest felicitations to 

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said 

and the people of Oman on the proud occasion of our 44th National Day

Today, we reaffirm our commitment to our noble leader His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said’s vision of a prosperous, self-reliant nation.
Industry as an effective tool for sustainable development
Expanding existing industrial estates and setting up new ones
Encouraging setting up of manufacturing industries
His Majesty's Cup for best five factories
The past period also witnessed the setting up of many basic industries on the understanding that industry with its various types is an important drive of socioeconomic development. Concentration in the upcoming period will be dedicated to expanding existing industrial estates and setting up new ones and encouraging manufacturing industries therein. This would increase economic return and create new job opportunities taking advantage of the unique geographic locations of such estates and their related free industrial zones. The setting up of estates would also attract local and foreign capitals through the provision of advantages, incentives and facilities for the enterprises set up therein. An effective tool to achieve economic objectives, the specialized industrial and free zones would also contribute to revising the economic movement and opening up export markets for manufacturing industries. In the context of encouraging Omani factories to maintain continuing development and productivity based on their technical and technological capabilities and compliance with the standard specifications and increased Omanisation, His Majesty the Sultan Cup Competition for Best Five Factories has been held annually since its announcement in 1991 in consistence with the objectives of the industrial strategy that the government seeks to achieve.
Duqm, a new asset to the national economy
Major projects such as the Duqm Port and Dry Dock
Early operation of the Duqm Airport
The Duqm Specialized Economic Zone Authority is considered to be a new credit to the national economy through the projects therein such as the Duqm Port, the Dry Dock for ship repairing and a number of industrial, commercial, tourist and logistic zones. The Sultanate is also planning to implement a number of major industries at this area and attract local and foreign investments, particularly since the Authority celebrated on 23 July the early operation of the Duqm Airport which is another important pillar in the region to serve as a regional station for transportation and logistical services and a hub for attraction of investors and businessmen.
The building and development drive continues in our beloved Oman in order to achieve further prosperity based on closed union between the country's leader His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, and the Omani people throughout the nation. May the Almighty Allah preserve His Majesty and bestow him with robust health and long life!
We Salute visionary leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said and extend our greetings to the people of Oman on the occasion of the 44th National Day.
Business Opportunities Forum records over RO 44 million worth of contracts in two days.

BRIDGING THE GAPS

In concurrence with the country’s celebrations marking the Glorious 44th National Day, OCCI in cooperation with the Public Authority for SMEs and Oman Oil Company organized the second edition of the Business Opportunities Forum during the period from 16-17 November 2014 at the Oman International Exhibition Center. The forum witnessed greater attendance on the part of the private sector’s companies and establishments in the Sultanate in addition to a wide international participation.

The opening ceremony was presided over by His Highness Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, Minister of Heritage and Culture, and attended by a number of Their Excellency and members of international delegations taking part in the forum as well as male and female business owners from the Sultanate and abroad.

Over RO 36 million worth of contracts were signed on the first day of the forum and contracts worth nearly RO 8 million were signed on the second day. The forum was
highly attended in its two days by male and female business owners in the Sultanate who consider such forums as a great opportunity for them to highlight their enterprises, familiarize with the enterprises of their participating counterparts, look into further possibilities to setting up future partnerships and obtain offers and deals that such forums provide.

In his opening address to the forum, His Excellency Said bin Saleh Al-Kiyumi, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, warmly welcomed the attendants and pointed out that the positive results attained by the first edition of this forum provided a motive for expanding the idea of this forum and sustain its continuity such that it remains an important annual event and serve as an economic gathering with international participation, with the ultimate goal of attracting yet wider prospects of foreign investment from various continents of the world.

“The responsibility for promoting the national economy is not only confined to particular establishments, but it is also the duty of all of us, individuals and establishments, to share this responsibility based on the nationalistic attitude naturally instilled into each and every one of us in gratitude to this giving nation and in preservation of its resources for the next generations of Oman to utilize. Based upon this principle, we promise that we will continue to work towards promoting the Omani private sector in joint efforts with our wise government in order to enable the private sector to undertake its role in developing the Sultanate’s overall economy. The third edition of the business opportunities forum scheduled for the period from 16-17 November 2015 will be the most attended and best prepared-for one. We are planning to make it an international event through our continued efforts in preparing well ahead of time for it. It is an opportunity now to extend our invitation to large companies to take part in the forthcoming forum,” said Al-Kiyumi.

Excellence Awards
The first day's program included announcement of OCCI's awards which came as follows:

- Highest value contract award won by Oman Railroad Company (a total sum of USD 30 billion),
- Highest value individual contract award won by Daleel Petroleum (total sum of 15,838,615)
- Award for for greater number of contracts signed during the forum amounting to 20 contracts won by Octal company
- Newly Set-up Companies Award won by Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel LLC
- Distinguished Activity Award for SMEs at the forum won by three companies, namely United Gulf Enterprises, Tatronic and Al-Wadi Catering and Services.

International delegations
On his part, Vincens Valinti, international consultant for trade cooperation with the Sultanate of Oman, expressed the happiness of members of international delegations taking part in this forum which he described as an important occasion for large, medium and small companies to meet under one roof. “What makes this forum such an important event is that it is not only an opportunity for companies to meet, but also due to the high value of contracts which will be announced during the forum days. This, in fact, is a real trend with the world now heading towards supporting this important sector to enable it to perform its business and act as a safety valve and effective contributor to the national income,” he said. Mr. Valinti expressed his admiration at the idea of the forum in itself saying that it provides a short-cut along the road for interested parties to identify and discover investment opportunities available in the Sultanate of Oman. Well known for its security and economic stability, Oman also provides the legal legislations that guarantee the rights of all investors and attract projects and investments.

He called upon foreign investors to think seriously about concluding investment deals and agreements and look for greater opportunities in various economic sectors, particularly since the investment climate in Oman is all set for this purpose. He also invited all local and foreign investors
to take advantage of the forum in establishing trade and economic partnerships in various spheres.

**Success story**
Ahmed bin Ibrahim Al Saadi, owner of United Gulf Enterprises Company addressed the forum about his successful experience in setting up his company. He said: “Since the first edition of the forum organized by the OCCI Al Batinah Branch, the SMEs have been actively involved in the seminar activities side by side with the large companies which allowed them to discuss opportunities of cooperation, partnership, support and establishment of investment enterprises employing Omani youth.

He pointed out that about one year ago, specifically at the first edition of the business opportunities forum, he took part as a job seeker, more accurately as seeker of an opportunity to set up a commercial enterprise. He said he was given an advice, support and encouragement by the Chairman of the OCCI branch in Sohar that changed the course of his life which enabled him to set up his company. “During my visit to the forum in its first edition in Sohar, I knew about a contract offer by Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel LLC for the maintenance of ceramic furnaces. Accordingly, I began completing the required procedures by opening a commercial register and having my enterprise and activities registered following a simplified and precise feasibility study that enabled me to communicate with the participating larger companies. This was in January 2013. Today, I feel pride not because I managed to set up my company but also because I was able to contribute to the economic development in Sohar in particular and the Sultanate in general and training and employing a number of nationals. I am now proud of the performance and productivity of my company and promise that we will exert further efforts in order to achieve our ambitions of becoming one of the largest companies specialized in furnace maintenance in the Gulf.

**Building a bridge for cooperation**
Mohammed bin Abdallah Ba Alawi, senior contract engineer at Oman LNG, addressed the forum on his company’s experience. He said: “The objective behind our participation is to support SMEs and work towards developing and uplifting their standard by providing business opportunities and concluding contracts and agreements with them. LNG always seeks to serve and develop the surrounding community through its various activities such as giving contracts to native companies and SMEs. The Business Opportunities Forum provides an opportunity to highlight the company’s care for SMEs, communicate with such enterprises directly and get acquainted with the services they provide and how to build a bridge of cooperation with them. In its plan for 2015, our company has put in place nearly USD 50 (only 50 dollars?????????????????) worth of contracts and agreements with SMEs which reflects our keenness on serving this category of enterprises which constitute a basic tributary of the national economy,” he said.
“We are hopeful that there will be no barriers or obstacles between us and we are ready to accept any remarks brought forward to us by SMEs. We know for certain that these enterprises can further develop and strengthen our mutual relations in the best interest of this nation.”

**Workshops**

Haitham Al Zidjali, leader of contracts and purchasing team at the Oman Exploration and Production Company, pointed out that the objective behind participating in the forum was to demonstrate their desire to develop communication with SMEs and offer a great deal of opportunities available in the company in order to serve other parties participating in the forum. Al Zidjali suggested adding workshops to be held on the sidelines of the forum in its next edition in fields concerning SMEs such as ways of tender awards, marketing and other important areas relating to these enterprises, the aim being to enable them to develop themselves and operate properly. “The Oman Exploration and Production Company has always served these enterprises and the community by way of programs and businesses offered to them, including the workshop that the company organizes in various fields,” he said.

Nasser bin Said Al Hinai, a participant in the forum and one of the beneficiaries from the contracts signed during the forum, said: “I had the chance to sign a contract with a major national economy. We hope that such forums will be held on a regular basis for the benefit of the business community. These forums represent a rich experience for the participants and are feasible in all aspects,” he stated.

A total of 160 SMEs took part in the forum representing 35 sectors in addition to 45 large companies representing many fields such as oil and gas, construction, roads, railroads, electrical power generation, steel manufacturing industries, logistics, oil industries, communications, furnishings, ports, aviation services, aluminum industries and tourism, among others.
Where are those old days? Where is Oman now?! Those are victorious stories of a leader and his people who formed together as one spirit and one body, and set off with Oman, in a sincere national spirit, to the ranks of developed countries.

Yes, it is a dual Omani wonderful success story of a brilliant leader and a country's thrilled people together worked for their country to be with modern pillars and triumphing over the countries and their peoples.

Yes! Where and again where are those difficult days and incurable diseases and time’s tensions and poor development before the blessed Renaissance?? The Renaissance which was led by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said - May Allah protect him and cherish him - who succeeded, with the grace of Allah and then by his people's sincerity in transforming the Sultanate of Oman to a symbol of progress, prosperity and development.

It was quite natural that when Oman has grown to be admired and pointed by the fingers, and its name and flag have begun to flutter in all countries of the world, outpouring great love started prevailing between the proud people of Oman and its wise leader to assure everyone the fact that our leader Qaboos, with his majesty and wisdom, relaxes and cheers up the souls.

If the Omani people celebrate these days of its glorious National Day, it is one of Oman's great, glad events, since the days and recurring events emphasize that the Omani celebrations are like oxygen that nourishes the spirit of patriotism for more future accomplishments.

So greetings but salute and gratitude are to a leader and his people who are together shining.

So, Oh! history, please witness that Oman - with its men and women - is flying in the sky for further accomplishments and ambitions to expand the development comprehensively in all governorates.

Oh! Omanis, you are blessed with your national days. So free up your creativities and double up your achievements. The world is looking to you with all admiration and jubilation. !!!
Inspired by your Vision.

Warmest felicitations to our noble leader, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said and the people of Oman on the joyous occasion of the 44th National Day. We at Oman Air salute his visionary leadership which continues to build a brighter tomorrow for future generations.
With a view to strengthening channels of constructive and direct dialogue among the three parties to production, namely the Government, employers and employees, and in the light of the importance of dialogue required to be conducted among the concerned parties as a basic framework to discuss various views, review applicable legislations and laws and further exchange experiences, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in cooperation with the Ministry of Manpower (MoM) and the Sultanate of Oman General Trade Union organized a seminar entitled “Prospects of Cooperation among Production Parties” during the period from 13-14 October 2014 under auspices of His Excellency Sheikh Abdallah bin Nasser Al Bakri, Minister of Manpower.

The seminar concluded with several recommendations urging the concerned authorities to expedite singing agreements of the International Labor Organization (ILO) relating to trade union rights and collective bargaining. The seminar encourages the concerned authorities to also expedite setting up labor courts and periodically review the legislations, laws and ministerial.
decisions regulating labor market within the private sector by activating the role of the Tripartite Dialogue Committee.

It stressed the need for a competent reconciliation committee to be set up with the main task of containing and resolving differences arising between the two parties to production. It also urged intensification of workshops, seminars and programs aimed at increasing awareness among production parties and addressing the authorities concerned with. The seminar further elaborated on the rights and duties of laborers which are essential to instill and strengthen the culture of labor into the next generations and bring about mechanisms to regulate the relationship between the two parties. It also called for adopting a proposal to organize a conference on the prospects of cooperation entitled “Social Dialogue Conference” during 2015 as well as regular gatherings, and applying rules and laws, guided by the laws regulating labor market, the aim being to further improve productivity and efficiency. Naturally, this reflects positively on the level of national manpower. The experience derived from the seminar in its third edition reflects how effective is the dialogue between the two production parties, namely employers and employees. It will certainly serve as a new addition to the upcoming stage in developing working environment, curtailing some wrongful practices and addressing some obstacles facing production parties in their drive through the labor market. This will also have a positive bearing on the Omani labor market and national manpower employed in the private sector in the short and long terms,” His Excellency the minister of manpower emphasized.

“In cooperation with the various government authorities and the private sector, the ministry has taken many steps to regulate labor workshops and joint programs for heads of trade unions and directors of human resources in a bid to bring closer various points of views and coordinate with their counterparts inside and outside the Sultanate in order to acquire further experience. The seminar also stressed the need to set up a working team consisting of the three production parties to visit the enterprises where there are national employees and meet with the employers and employees. It stressed the need to protect social rights in their holistic concept and review the insurance related laws in order to safeguard such rights in so far as the years of employments and maximum retirement age are concerned.

Labor market is well paced

“The holding of the third edition of the seminar on the prospects of cooperation among the three production parties indicated the significance of dialogue which has now become a necessity due to its positive implications on labor market and national economy. The Sultanate has made good steps with the production parties towards developing an appropriate working environment market, including temporary suspension of some activities in some establishments, utilization of the expatriate manpower existing in the labor market to achieve some sort of equilibrium and effectively contribute to the upcoming period,” His Excellency pointed out.

His Excellency indicated that the Omani labor market was making good steps with coordination being made with the concerned authorities led by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and other organizations in a serious bid by these authorities to tackle the distortions and obstacles to the labor market. He further stated that the Public Authority for Social Insurance last year made a package of amendments to the insurance benefits it offers to the private sector pointing out that there were some demands brought forward to it through the Sultanate of Oman General Trade Union which would be studied in the upcoming period.

“In the light of the demands made by the production parties, the Omani Labor Law was reviewed with the assistance of a specialized expert house with the law now being in its revision stages. It is hoped that the labor law will be issued in accordance
with the requirements of the upcoming period,” said His Excellency.

**Dialogue among production parties**

His Excellency Said bin Saleh Al-Kiyumi, Chairman of Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce, stated that the seminar in its third edition would strengthen the channels of direct dialogue among production parties and have considerable impact on integrating and aligning the roles of each party towards improved and stabilized quality of work, hence leading to increased productivity and further innovations.

“Our commitment to continuing to organize this seminar in close cooperation and coordination with our partners in the social dialogue as well as our partners in the distinctively experienced labor-related international organizations stems from our belief and conviction that it is important to conduct dialogue with the production parties. This dialogue is meant to be a basic framework not only to address the labor demands and disputes in an atmosphere of mutual respect among all parties but also to work jointly to reconsider the laws regulating dialogue among these parties, achieve greater and wider exchange of information, experiences and views and participate in a way or another in reformulating relevant decisions and rules. For this reason, we are keen with our partners whose support we appreciate in conducting a transparent and objective dialogue,” said Al-Kiyumi.

**Right to work**

Salim bin Naseer Al Hadhrami, Director General of Planning and Development at the Ministry of Manpower, delivered an address on behalf of the Ministry of Manpower, pointing out that since the beginning of the blessed renaissance under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, the Government has been keen on issuing laws and legislations regulating working relationship with the social partners, including employees and business owners with such laws and legislations always stressing the right of workers to the work of their choice which suits their skills and abilities and to earn a fair wage in return for such work.

“The employer was given full right to set up and manage economic enterprises in such a manner as to sustain their continuity by increasing production and becoming capable of competition with the ultimate goal of achieving the development objectives, expanding their activities and improving the living standard of citizens,” he said.

He pointed out that the economic developments witnessed by the Sultanate, the increasing rise in the number of national manpower in the private sector coupled with their varied levels, skills and specializations, the continuing development of labor legislations and completion of the tripartite representation system of the production parties stand out in testament of how the Sultanate could take advantage of these criteria and standards. The Declaration issued by the International Labor Organization on the principles and basic rights in labor and its keenness in providing decent employment to workers is basically meant to encourage production, respect rights of workers and improve their conditions.

**Organized economy**

Addressing the seminar, Nabhan bin Ahmed Al Batashi, Chairman of the Sultanate of Oman’s Trade Union, said: “Work is not only a means of living, but is a reflection of human life and a mirror that reflects the magnitude of development and progress that a society has made. In contrast, the collapse of societies and civilizations has been closely linked to the diminishing value of work and disregard of the importance of workers. The widened gap between workers and employers gives rise to the material philosophy and lead to neglect of the human aspect of work prompting many countries to intervene to reinstate the concept of work and its position. Societies cannot develop without provision of a decent and fair life to workers.”

Al Batashi pointed out that social dialogue and protection of principles and basic rights of work are considered to be one of the basic pillars that enable us to create an organized economy allowing the workers to further develop and improve their material and social life. “For this reason, we have always been keen through the negotiations we conducted at the level of establishments or sectors or at the national level on achieving balance between production and provision of an appropriate environment for workers,” he said.

**Diversifying dialogue channels**

Obain Braiki of the International Labor Organization, pointed out that the world in recent years has witnessed economic and financial crises that worsened the sufferings of the poor and marginalized communities. The severe social tremors that hit the Arab region call upon the concerned parties to diversify the channels of institutionalized dialogue through collective negotiations to minimize all tensions or through periodic meetings aimed at supporting and strengthening negotiating approaches.
Heartiest Congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said and the people of Oman on the blessed occasion of the 44th National Day.
“The economic violations in the Arab region were now threatening the interests of all with workers losing many of their privileges and economic and social rights. He pointed out that the phenomenon of job seekers is increasing and employers are threatened by unequal competition imposed by international trade which leads to tension and collision unless the governments succeed in establishing an objective and balanced dialogue by sharing benefits and sacrifices,” he said.

**Relationship between companies and trade unions**

A number of working papers were presented during the seminar, including a working paper entitled “Future Prospects of Cooperation”, “Developing relationship between Companies and Trade Unions” presented by Nasser bin Hamad Al Hilali, Executive Director of Human Resources at the Port of Sohar. He pointed out that the number of trade unions declined from 199 last year to about 190 this year and that there were 173 trade unions in 2012. He indicated that most companies have trade unions, which proves the companies’ desire to maintain dialogue with employees in order to reach an accord and improve relationship between employers and national workforce.

Al Hilali stated that the most important challenges are non-existence of clear and detailed laws for the work of trade unions, limitation of the terms of reference of such trade unions, the desire to have trade unions in companies, insistence by the two sides or either of them to stick to their opinion and non-acceptance of compromised solutions. He added that a benefit of the good relationship between trade unions and company management is the endeavor to achieve mutual interest in order to create an appropriate working environment that assists in consolidating job satisfaction of employees and avoiding undesirable confrontations and obstacles, and hence reach tangible and useful solutions and results for the issues and matters under discussion. He concluded that the existence of a healthy working environment would in turn increase productivity.

**Challenges to the private sector**

Rashid bin Saleh Al Maskari of the Sultanate of Oman’s Trade Union, presented a working paper entitled “Stability of National Workforce and Challenges to the Private Sector.” He reviewed the findings of the 2014 Job Satisfaction Questionnaire pointing out that the years of experience of the workers who were targeted by the questionnaire ranged between 1 and 16 years. He stated that 61% of them were unsatisfied with the salary they draw against the work they perform while 75% of them expressed their dissatisfaction over the promotion procedures applicable in their companies.

**Social protection**

Obaid Al Biraiki, member of the ILO Office in Beirut, delivered a working paper entitled “Social Protection” explaining the concept of social protection in international legislations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provide that every person has the right to a specific standard of living that is meant to be enough for himself/her to safeguard his/her health and maintain wellbeing for himself/her and his/her family. It also includes nutrition, dress, housing, and necessary medical care and social services. According to the Declaration, every person has the right to secure a living in the event of unemployment, disease, disability, widowing, aging and other causes of loss of subsistence due to circumstances beyond his/her control. He further stated that social protection is the essence of basic rights and that there are several existing legislations providing for this as basic human right, economic, social, civil and political right according to international labor standards.

“Social protection is a measure of how far social justice is being served and at the same time is a product of the developmental policy adopted by each country, particularly with regard to the human resources. It is the means by which it is possible to resist all negative practices of discrimination and exclusionism and paves the way for poverty and marginalization issues to be effectively addressed and eliminated,” he pointed out.
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Mariam summary the services provided by her firm named "Wasm Digital Media" in four points:

Firstly: provision of administrative and technical consultancy services. Under this heading, the company draws up policies for social media pages with particular emphasis on decision-makers and the course and limits of their relationship with the public.

Secondly: The Company can either provide training on social media pages management to the concerned staff to enable them to professionally manage these pages or undertake by itself the management of these pages on behalf of its customers.

Mariam set up her company that is specialized in digital media about one year ago. Prior to that she worked for four years which provided her with a reasonable practical experience that enabled her to achieve the success she aspired for. However, it was not easy for her to do that as she also confronted some difficulties in managing the project. At the beginning, she took some actions without a well-defined approach, but she could overcome the difficulties with determination and resolve.

As for the company’s capital and related financing, Mariam says: “the company was first self-financed without me then needing big capital. However, the most important factors for my success were the will, determination and the encouragement accorded to me by those around me.”
Thirdly: Provision of analysis through the monitoring of customers’ trends and the objective of their presence on the social media and identifying the targeted segment of community through these pages.

Fourthly: Conducting workshops on social media with a view to uplifting awareness of those in charge of social media.

“The users of these media should be aware that these media are two-tier. They may either ensure publicity of the firm and its activity achieving interaction with its programs or otherwise misunderstood causing adverse impact on the firm” Mariam adds.

Mariam considers her mother as the first supporter of her drive into entrepreneurship and acknowledges that she was all through there for her successes after the Almighty Allah. About this, she says: “The trust that was accorded to me by my family, particularly my mother, was the main motivation for me to continue and pursue this dream, no matter how tough are the difficulties.”

Integration of roles
Asked whether the digital media companies like “Wasm” and others diminish dependence on the departments concerned with this area within various firms, she answers: “On the contrary, I believe that the digital media companies play a complementary role to the work of such departments. One of the roles of a cooperating company is to enable the staff of these departments to manage their pages effectively and address any crisis that may arise with the public providing them with a clearly defined strategy on how to properly deal with the public through these pages.”

Wasm’s participations
Regarding the most important participations of “Wasm Digital Media” in managing media events, Mariam says: “Praises be the Almighty Allah we have won the trust of our clients right from the first participation which allowed our company to have larger publicity in a comparatively short period of time. One of the participations which we are proud of is our participation in the Dates Festival held in the Interior Governorate where we managed to enable the festival to have wide publicity and intensive presence. We also had another participation in the Omani Innovations Exhibitions where we implemented an application to monitor opinions of the public and the participants about the event for entrepreneurs to benefit from such opinions for their business development.”

Women as pioneers
Speaking about Omani women's roles in the progress now being witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman in all sectors, Mariam states: “As a woman, I feel that Omani women had their clear blueprint in all walks of life proving their proficiency and competence as employees, entrepreneurs or housewives. They could utilize the support given to them by the wise government through the introduced laws enabling women to exercise their leading role side by side with men.”

Future projects
About her future steps and projects, Mariam says: “I am now conducting a research focusing on mechanism of interaction and relationship between decision-making institutions on one hand and the communication media and public opinion on the other and their direct and strong bearing on decision-making. Public opinion in democratic societies represents an important source in women’s choices and attitudes.”
The Ad Dhahirah Branch of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has dispatched a trade delegation for a 10-day visit to the Peoples’ Republic of China (PRC) and the Kingdom of Malaysia headed by Mr. Ali bin Salah Al Kalbani, OCCI board member and OCCI Ad Dhahirah branch chairman. The delegation consisted of 23 entrepreneurs and SME owners from Wilayats of Ibra, Yanqul and Dhank.

Activating trade relations

Mr. Ali bin Salah Al Kalbani pointed out that the visit came as a personal initiative by the SME owners and entrepreneurs under the supervision of the OCCI Ad Dhahirah Branch with contribution by Daleel Petroleum and Gulf Mining Groups. The aim was to provide the delegation members with knowledge and skills that enable them to develop their SMEs and familiarize with the modern methods of management of such productive and service enterprises. He added that the visit was an important step having positive bearing on activating trade and economic businesses for all participants and worked towards further strengthening trade relations with business owners in China and Malaysia. This initiative comes in the context of the keen interest of the OCCI Ad Dhahirah Branch in providing support to the SMEs with a view to uplifting their performance. The visit also comes as part of the nine initiatives announced early by the OCCI in support of SMEs.

A rich economic program

The visit program included a tour of the international exhibition held at the Chinese district of Guangzhou where the delegation members familiarized themselves with Chinese companies and firms showcased in the exhibition. The exhibition also provided an opportunity for the trade delegation members to meet with the exhibition organizers in order to conclude with them trade agreements and deals and familiarize with the investors interested in investing
in the Sultanate. Chinese businessmen were invited to attend the Omani soiree in China which included diversified promotional and economic sections that reflected the nature of trade and economic investment in Oman under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, May Allah preserve and protect. Commemorative gifts were exchanged with the Chinese SME owners. Meetings were held with the owners of companies specialized in custom clearing and container price rates.

A visit was also made to the largest shopping center embodying various Chinese goods and products in the district of Guangzhou.

The International Exhibition in Guangzhou is held twice every year and attracts thousands of merchants and businessmen from various countries of the world. At that exhibition which is one of the largest industrial exhibitions in the world, the Chinese companies showcase their various industrial products. Encompassing the largest concentration of Chinese products manufactures by all Chinese factories and witnessing the conclusion of thousands of trade deals, the exhibition was first opened in the spring of 1957.

In the evening, the trade delegation members visited some tourist sites in Guangzhou and toured the most famous cultural and historical features in the city.

**Visit to Canton Trade Exhibition**

The trade delegation visited the International Trade Exhibition (Canton) in the city of Guangzhou where they familiarized with all exhibition sections, particularly since the exhibition embodies tens of wings and sections of various companies in China, including manufacturing companies, sanitation companies, electronic companies of various types and electrical appliance companies.

The businessmen and merchants familiarized themselves with many trade sections within the exhibition and their products and manufacturers such as electronic and mobile phone manufacturing companies and companies involved in the manufacturing of electrical appliances, building materials, ceramics and sanitary equipment. Omani businessmen had negotiations with many of the Chinese companies taking part in the exhibition in order to conclude trade deals and contracts.

**Omani Soiree**

The trade delegation held an Omani soiree at the city of Guangzhou where a large number of business owners and entrepreneurs in China took part. Ali bin Saleh Al Kilbani delivered an address at the gathering saying: “The Omani-Chinese relations are deep-rooted in history and have
particularly further developed during the era of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said. We are told in history that the Omani ships navigated their way through the seas and oceans to reach the seaport of Canton in China loaded with various Omani goods and commodities such as dates, dried lemons and the commodities of ancient times”.

**Motivational investment environment**

In concluding his address, Al Kalbani said: “The Sultanate’s investment climate is promising and even motivating investors to invest in economic enterprises that support our national economy. We are, therefore, inviting the Chinese businessmen to visit the Sultanate, particularly Ad Dhahirah Governorate which is now witnessing a promising trade and economic movement.”

**Introductory film on investments in the Sultanate of Oman**

A film on the nature of investment climate in Oman and facilities offered to interested investors was played followed by a folklore performance of the Omani traditional dances known as Ayala and Razha which was admired by the attendants. Omani sweets and coffee were also presented to the attendants. The soiree concluded by presentation of gifts and commemorative shields to the companies and organizations cooperating with the trade delegation in the Ad Dhahirah Governorate.

**Monument featuring the depth of Omani-Chinese relations**

The trade delegation paid a visit to the memorial statue of the Sultanate erected near by the river of the Chinese city of Guangzhou. The monument features a gate of an Omani fort surrounded by towers and edifices on top with an Omani ship named Sohar inside. This monument epitomizes the depth of the long standing historical Omani-Chinese relations and stands out as a symbol that the Omani sailors reached the Chinese trade and economic cities, including the ancient city of Guangzhou. The trade delegation also visited the largest shopping center for Chinese goods and commodities in the city of Guangzhou. Thousands of Chinese and tourists shop at this multi-storey giant building where everyone can find each and every type of Chinese goods and commodities.

**Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**

In the context of the trade delegation’s visit to the PRC, a memorandum of understanding in the field of trade was signed between Bin Umayr Office in China and Al Amri International Exports and Imports (under incorporation) based in Wilayat Ibri, Ad Dhahirah Governorate. This is considered to be one of the most important trade contracts and an important asset for the citizens of Ad Dhahirah Governorate. The office will provide numerous services to facilitate for any citizen or trade establishment direct transaction with China. The provided services also include provision of air tickets, transport, hotel reservation and tour of tourist sites in case anyone wishes to go to China for direct purchase at reasonable prices. They also include goods shipping from China and all procedures relating to clearing by the office in Ad Dhabirah Governorate.

**A successful visit**

Khalfan bin Said Al Yahyae, a member of the visiting
delegation said: “Our visit to the PRC was successful with our businessmen having the opportunity to visit one of the largest trade exhibitions in the world for Chinese companies and industries. Some of our businessmen also signed several trade agreements and deals with some Chinese factories and companies while others will import some of the Chinese equipment. The visit will certainly open up favorable investment opportunities for the Governorate, particularly since we had an opportunity to closely familiarize with the Chinese economic giants.”

A rich experience
Saleem bin Humood Al Dar'i said: “I have benefitted too much from the visit and the greatest benefit I had was out visit to the Canton Exhibition which is one of the largest trade exhibition of Chinese companies. The exhibition encompasses many Chinese companies specialized in sanitation, electrical appliances, electronics, spare parts and agricultural machinery. Therefore, the visit represents a rich experience for SME owners who could familiarize with the Chinese industry, conclude trade deals and receive information about container prices and custom duties in China.”

Malaysia Visit
The program of visit to Malaysia included visits to many trade, tourist, economic and service locations.

The delegation also visited the city of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In this respect, Ali bin Salah Al Kalbani said: “The trade delegation visit came in the context of preparing the youth for a forthcoming economic future for the Wilayats of Ibrī, Yanqul and Dhank enabling them to take advantage of the international experiences in economic, trade, personal and social projects.”

Continued encouragement of entrepreneurs
He indicated that the OCCI Al Dhabirah Branch would continue to encourage young entrepreneurs to adopt new investment enterprise that would effectively serve the local community. He pointed out that for this reason the OCCI has become a reference for many business owners and that there was a trend to launch a number of initiatives to promote investment activities in the Wilayats of Ad Dhahirah.

Within the framework of the visit, His Excellency Sayyid Fakhrī bin Mohammed Al Said, the Sultanate’s ambassador to Malaysia, received the trade delegation visiting China and Malaysia. The Sultanate’s ambassador talked to the delegation members about the Omani-Malaysian relations and aspects of trade and economic cooperation between Oman and Malaysia. Ali Saleh Al Kilbani pointed out that promising economic enterprises were forthcoming in Ad Dhahirah Governorate, including the logistical zone in the Wilayah which will be set up on the Empty Corner road linking the Sultanate with Saudi Arabia coupled with the railroad which is expected to pass through Wilayat Ibrī.

Familiarization with economic and tourist facilities in Malaysia
The trade delegation further toured the economic and tourist facilities and cultural sites in Malaysia, visited the Genting Highland using cable car service up and down the fascinating Genting highland passing through farms of flowers, strawberry and honey bee farming. The delegation also visited the communications tower, Kuala Lumpur lighthouse and Putra Jaya area which is the modern administrative area of Malaysia as well as Masjid Putrajaya.
Training courses for SMEs

The Human Resources and Labor Market Committee of OCCI held its second meeting for 2014 under the chairmanship of engineer Humood bin Salim Al Saadi, OCCI board member and Committee Chairman, at the OCCI's head office.

The meeting reviewed the items included on its agenda and nominated Hussain bin Omer bin Alawi Al Ibrahim to the position of the Committee Vice-Chairman. The meeting also approved the committee’s terms of reference.

The committee adopted a proposal relating to the holding of four multi-purpose training courses targeting the establishments and companies belonging to this sector in the fields of e-marketing, finance management, accounting, feasibility studies and negotiation skills. The courses will be conducted as part of the committee’s contribution in support of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The committee also dealt with a number of issues relating to the human resources sector within the private sector establishments and companies.

SME Convention in Ad Dhahirah Governorate

Public Authority for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) conducted an introductory convention on Entrepreneurship Award at OCCI Branch at Wilayat Ibri, presented by a number of businessmen and businesswomen from the wilayats of the governorate. The convention aimed promotion of entrepreneurship culture among the society and helping on performance of SMEs as well as encouraging the businessmen on competition and innovation.

At the beginning of the convention Ali bin Salah bin Ali Al Kalbani, board member of OCCI and Chairman of the Chamber's branch at Ad Dahirah, delivered the welcome speech where he emphasized the role of the Chamber in the promotion of SMEs and in encouraging the entrepreneurs as well as its role in the advancement of the Omani economy. He added that the business leadership award will have a positive role and incentive for the initiatives of individuals and establishments supporting entrepreneurship.

The business leadership award includes three main categories: The first is for the leadership and the second prize for entrepreneurship of SMEs and the third is for the support to entrepreneurship. A number of entrepreneurs from Ad Dahirah Governorate have been registered to enter into this competition.

Committee formed in Buraimi to address emerging issues

Board of Directors of OCCI branch at Al Buraimi Governorate announced the formation of a new committee at the branch under the name Committee to address the emerging market issues. This is to discuss all the issues and problems that arise on the labor market in the governorate which requires to be dealt on urgent basis in order to avoid aggravation and to eliminate economic losses, which may result by the delay in dealing with the issue and taking proper decision by private sector representatives of the owners and entrepreneurs, as well as concerned authorities in the government sector.

The Council also approved the formation of a committee of members of the Board of branch Administration for the study of the implementation regulations of the Chamber Law and powers of branches of the Chamber in order to put visions and proposals appropriate to modify it according to the aspirations of the private sector and its great objectives to strengthen its position as an essential economic partner of the government in the plans and development projects.

These discussions were during the third meeting of Board of Directors of the Chamber's branch in Al Buraimi Governorate, presided by Sheikh Mohammed Bin Butti Al Neyadi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Branch, in the presence of the members. The meeting also discussed the phenomenon of wrong exploitation of the facilities granted to the governorate, especially facilities granted to encourage self-employment and foreign investment. The meeting emphasized the importance of maintaining these facilities because of their impact in stimulating economic mobility within the governorate and these facilities are not to be negatively exploited, which can be done in coordination and cooperation with the concerned authorities.
OCCI branches to improve performance

A meeting of branch directors of OCCI was conducted at the headquarters of the Chamber’s branch in Al Buraimi Governorate, presided by Zakaria bin Abdullah Al Saadi, Acting Assistant Director-General for affairs of branches.

The meeting reviewed a number of organizational model structures proposed for the executive body for branches of OCCI in order to determine the functional responsibilities, to coordinate efforts and to take advantage of the available facilities and their optimal exploitation. Also it was to clearly define the eligibilities vested in the administration and departments and to organize administrative work so as to reflect the achievement of production efficiency of OCCI branches.

Some of them are proposals of job description of each function and suggestion of some mechanisms that enable members of the executive body for the branches of the Chamber to perform their roles in a more positive and with a higher benefits to companies and institutions in various governorates of the Sultanate.

Services Committee to discuss terms of reference

Services Committee of OCCI held its first meeting this year under the chairmanship of Mr. Rashid bin Amer Maslahi, Chairman of the Committee and in the presence of members of the Committee at OCCI’s headquarters building.

Dr. Walid bin Khalid Al Zadjali was appointed as Vice Chairman of the Committee. Task forces have been formed for the various sectors that fall within the scope of the committee. Heads of those forces were chosen. They are the media sector, headed by Mr. Hussein Murtaza Mohsin al Lawati, the health sector, headed by Dr. Walid bin Khalid Al Zadjali, IT sector headed by Mr. Munir bin Mohammed al-Rashidi, sector of retail, restaurants and cafes, headed by Mr. Yahya bin Mohsen Al Shaksy, automotive services sector, headed by Mr. Walid bin Khamis Al Balushi, the construction sector, headed by Engineer Said bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Sector of Consultancy agencies, headed by Mr. Mani bin Thuwaini Sadoun, sector of service offices headed by Mr. Hood Bin Yahya al Hoqani, and sector of clubs and beauty salons headed by Ms. Zulfa bint Mohammed Al Barwani.

Ad Dhahira Branch Celebrates World Food Day

Under the auspices of HE Sheikh Saif bin Himyar Al Malek Al Shehhi, Governor of Al Dhahira Governorate, Al Dhahira Farmers Association has celebrated the occasion of World Food Day, in cooperation with the OCCI branch at Al Dhahira Governorate, represented in the CFS (Committee on World Food Security) and the Directorate General for Agriculture and Livestock at Al-Dhahira Governorate.

The celebration was in the presence of Dr. Khalifa Bin Salem Kiyumi, Agricultural Research Advisor at the Office of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Dr. Mustafa El-Zein Muzzammil, representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in the Sultanate and a number of farmers, businessmen and businesswomen.

Hammad bin Saeed Al Khatri, member of the Farmers Association at Al Dhahira Governorate, presented his words discussing the role played by the association in the three wilayats of the governorate, viz., Ibr, Yanqul and Dhank, by conducting many activities and events important to the farmers.

Sheikh Ali bin Suwaidan Al Balushi presented a paper titled as ‘Role of Farmers Association in Ad Dhahira Governorate’, which shed lights to the objectives of the Association. Also Engineer Salem bin Saif Al Abdul, Officer responsible for studies and follow-ups, Oman Food Investment Holding Company SAOC, participated in the event by presenting a paper on World Food Day.

The patron of the celebration opened an exhibition, which included many agriculture and food products, which the governorate is famous for. Oman Development Bank also participated in the event and introduced its services.
Ad Dhahira Committee discusses Tourism Promotion

Tourism Committee of OCCI Ad Dhahirah Branch reviewed a number of topics related to the revitalization of the aspects of the tourist activity of the three wilayats at the Governorate, Ibri, Yanqul and Dhank. This meeting was chaired by Saif Bin Saeed Al Badil, Vice Chairman of OCCI Ad Dhahirah Branch and the head of the Tourism Committee in the presence of a number of members.

The participants agreed to form a task force to arrange a workshop putting forth special imaginations and visions for tourism strategy at Ad Dhahirah Governorate. This workshop would be conducted at OCCI Branch at Ad Dhahira in presence of tourism concerned personalities. The organization of the workshop shall be supervised by the Ministry of Tourism. Also the participants reviewed the draft of tourism brochure for Ad Dhahirah Governorate. The brochure monitors the tourism aspects with its various types, and is proposed to be published in future by the Ministry of Tourism.

Royal Decree Welcomed

Mining committee of OCCI appreciated the Royal Decree for the establishment of the Public Authority for Mining under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, because of the importance of the role played by the mining sector in the diversification of income sources reducing the dependence on oil as the primary source of income.

HE Said Bin Saleh Al Kiyumi, Chairman of the Chamber said that the Royal Decree to establish a special authority for mining comes from the insight that enjoyed by the government under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said - may Allah protect him - and awareness of many and varied mineral resources possessed by the Sultanate, which can strongly and remarkably contribute to increase revenue of the country. He added that the establishment of the Public Authority for Mining will intensify efforts to take advantage of the treasures contained in the territories and the mountains of the Sultanate and exploit them optimum and will reflect the volume of work to diversify sources of income.

HE the Chairman called for attention to this sector through the provision of infrastructure that will help the growth of this sector and serve it to keep pace with developments through bringing up new markets for the products of mining and finding land, sea and air routes that help to stimulate movement in this sector.

Sheikh Butti Bin Mohammed Al Neyadi, Chairman of OCCI branch in Al Buraimi Governorate and Chairman of the Mining Committee of the Chamber explained that the Royal Decree came for regulating the operation of the mining sector in the Sultanate and for its development and keeping it as an important source of income.

Niyadi added: We in OCCI as representatives of the private sector and representatives of workers in the mining sector, extend our request to the officials for the provision of infrastructure for the sector such as provision of private ports for mining, expansion of the international market for quarry products, finding new destinations such as Asia and Africa, facilitating the procedures for local companies and small and medium-sized enterprises to work in the mining sector, consideration of manufacturing and value-added sector and amending some laws such as the extension of the license to at least five years.

Economic Committee holds meeting

Economic Committee held a meeting at OCCI, presided by Qais bin Mohammed Yousuf, Board member of chamber and Chairman of Economic Committee. The preliminary reports submitted by the teams of value-added and privatization, as well as the team for study of challenges were discussed. Each team of the committee briefed mechanisms of the team work during the next phase. After extensive discussion, the Committee recommended to allocate separate meetings for each team to discuss the recommendations proposed by each and then raise the same to the concerned authorities after they got approved by OCCI’s Board of Directors.

The Committee also reviewed the draft Regulations for the Law for Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), and the visions of the Committee on the proposed regulations to curb the exploitation of facilities granted by the government, and the subject of trade and economic movement in the Sultanate in the light of the transfer of the shipping activities from the Port of Sultan Qaboos to Sohar Port, investment competitiveness in the Sultanate and method to strengthen performance, in addition to the issue of the role of the private sector for economic vision of the Sultanate of 2040. The committee recommended the chamber to provide data and reports on the abovementioned two topics for extensive discussion during the next meetings of the Committee to come out with appropriate recommendations. The Committee also stressed the importance of the establishment of Data Bank by the Chamber to provide reports and studies necessary for the Committee and other committees.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chairman of the Economic Committee extended an invitation to participate in the activities of business opportunities Forum, to be organized by the Chamber.
“Business Leadership Award” Team meets entrepreneurs

Business Leadership Award team of the Public Authority for the development of small and medium enterprises, has organized a workshop on Business Leadership Award in cooperation with OCCI branch in Al Buraimi Governorate, in the presence of HE Sheikh Rashid bin Ahmed Al Shamsi, a member of the Shura Council, representing wilayat Al Buraimi and Sheikh Butti Bin Mohammed Al Neyadi, Chairman of OCCI Branch at Al Buraimi Governorate and a number of pioneers and entrepreneurs in the governorate.

The workshop began with an address by Badria bint Abdullah Al Hiniaiyah from the Public Authority for the development of small and medium enterprises and she confirmed that the allocation of Award for Business Leadership was a part of the decisions by a seminar of the SMEs, held at Sih as-Shamikhat in the wilayat of Bahla, Ad Dakhilya Governorate, from 21 to 23 January, 2013, sublimed by directives of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said - may Allah protect him.

She pointed out that the award aims to promote the important role of these enterprises with the ability to provide multiple and renewable jobs for young people and encourage them to create and implement their own projects, and leadership in its management and development that will enable them to contribute to the development efforts as well as to honor personalities and enterprises that contribute to the support of leadership and support for SMEs in addition to its role in providing a favorable environment to build up acquaintance networks and exchange experiences in the field of entrepreneurship and the development of these institutions.

Badria Hiniaiyah explained during her speech that the three categories that make up the award of business leadership, small and medium enterprises, and supporter of entrepreneurship. The first category includes the best entrepreneur (male and female separately) awards, best project idea, the best home project, the best educational initiative, and the best media initiative. The second category awards are divided for small enterprises that include the best micro-enterprise, best small enterprise (industrial, service, trade, agricultural, fishery and tourism), awards for medium enterprises that include the best medium-sized enterprise (industrial, service, trade, agricultural, fishery and tourism). Also three awards are in the third category, for the best financial agency, the best government sector and the best private company.

Al Hiniaiyah shed light through a visual presentation on the most important requirements necessary to participate in award: for the category of Leadership Award leader or entrepreneur shall be at least the age of 18 years and the age of the project does not exceed more than two years. The age of a home project should not be less than 12 months. The conditions for small and medium enterprises category awards are that the enterprises shall be entirely owned by the Omani and registered in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as to be registered in the Public Authority for the development of small and medium enterprises and registered in social insurance. The owner of such enterprises or one of its partners shall be full-time dedicated to its management. It shall be profitable and not to be a branch or subsidiary of a large institution. With regard to the terms of the award in the third category the applied enterprise must be operating in the Sultanate and that does not exceed the age of the service or project more than two years. Each applicant is entitled to participate only with one project in each category.

Abeer bint Abdullah Al Jassim, advisor in the field of SMEs, explained that the registration of the participants in the award is electronic through the official website of this award. This allows those in charge of the award to easily screen and evaluate in the final stages of the award. Also the award will provide a database of a large number of SMEs as well as the opportunity to achieve the electronic linkage between these enterprises and the supporting sectors. As for the details of the prizes to the winners, she noted that the winners will receive cash prizes and shields in addition to consulting, marketing and training services by the authority.

At the end of the workshop, Entrepreneurship Award team invited all pioneers and entrepreneurs in Al Buraimi Governorate to initiate to register and participate in the prizes because of its role in the promotion of entrepreneurship and development of the capabilities and skills of entrepreneurs and owners of SMEs.

Computer Course Conducted

Ad Dhahira branch of OCCI organized free computer training course for a period of ten consecutive days at Taqiq bin Ziyad School in wilayat Dhank, which was utilized by about 60 participants (male and female) who were job seekers or working in various government and private enterprises.

Ali bin Salah bin Ali Kalbani, board member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Oman and Chairman of the Chamber’s branch at Ad Dhahira Governorate, explained that this training course was organized as the Chamber’s branch at Ad Dhahira concerned on training and rehabilitation of the local community to enhance their abilities, and help in the development of their knowledge level and their practical skills. He added that OCCI’s Ad Dhahira branch will continue its efforts in order to implement many of the courses in various wilayats of the governorate Ibi, Yanqul and Dhank, where the opportunity will be given to businessmen, businesswomen, employees of public and private sectors and job seekers, to enhance their skills.
OCCI participates in forum “Invest in Bahrain”

OCCI participated in the activities of forum “Invest in Bahrain” conducted in the Kingdom of Bahrain under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

OCCI delegation to the Forum was headed by Engineer Redha bin Juma Al Saleh, Vice Chairman of Administrative and Financial Affairs. This forum is the ninth in a series of investment forums organized by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Kingdom of Bahrain, aiming to attract investments to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Engineer Al Saleh also participated during his visit to the Kingdom as a representative of the Chamber for meeting with the Council of Commercial Arbitration Centre of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which discussed several topics. The most important among them are discussion on the marketing plan for the strategy of the Centre's work for the period 2015-16 and discussion by the Secretary-General on the follow-up of financing for the project of construction of a permanent headquarters of the center, in addition to discussion by the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the application of the financial and unified accounting system to organizations specialized in the framework of GCC, as well as a glance to the administrative report to the center up to 30 September 2014.

World Bank Delegation visits OCCI

Engineer Redha bin Juma Al Saleh, Vice Chairman of OCCI and Administrative and Financial Affairs, Member of the Board of Directors received a delegation from the World Bank at the headquarter building of the Chamber. The session was attended by Abdul Azim bin Abbas al-Bahrani, Director General of the Chamber.

The Vice Chairman welcomed the guest delegation valuing this visit to know the latest developments and economic conditions. He exhibited the role of the chamber in promotion of the private sector and improvement of the economy in general, and explained the chamber's concern in small and medium enterprises and chamber's activities for the same.

The members of the delegation pointed out the objectives of the visit which can be summarized as to know on the opportunities and challenges that are faced generally by the private sector and particularly by the SMEs. Also the meeting discussed many types of sectors in the Sultanate and investment opportunities endured by these sectors in addition to the challenges faced by investors in these sectors.

Abdul Azim Bahrani also pointed to the role played by the Chamber and its contribution to make visual observations about the economic and investment sectors through board meetings and committees, which include specialists from various sectors and to raise their proposals for the concerned authorities in the government.

German University students at Al Buraimi

A number of students from German University of Berlin visited OCCI Branch at Al Buraimi Governorate. They were accompanied by Dr. Hamad bin Masood Ghuraibi, Chairman of Department of Execution and Tracking at the Directorate General of Housing. The delegation met with officials involved in the Chamber in the presence of both Rashid bin Ahmed Al Badi as-Suwaidi and Yusuf bin Abdul Rahim Bin Karam Al Farisi, members of the branch administration board.

This visit comes within the framework of research and studies being conducted by five students from the University of Berlin on a number of sectors in Al Buraimi Governorate, as a part of their theses for Master's Degree, which they shall submit during this period. During the visit there were meetings dealt with a number of topics related to the role of the Chamber in service and development of private sector enterprises and its efforts to promote and stimulate economic mobility within the Governorate in addition to talks about the economic situation of the governorate, its strategic importance and its impact on civil and cultural situation of the wilayats in the governorate.

On the other hand, the light was shed to the importance of the research conducted by the members of the delegation and the possibility to benefit from the findings of the researchers, each one according to the subject of one's study. It was stressed that all ongoing research will be published via the web site of the university, as well as copies will be sent to the concerned authorities in the governorate in order to let the concerned know the most import conclusions of these research and studies.

The student members of the delegation are focusing their research on specific sectors only in Al Buraimi governorate. Those include transport, heritage, tourism and urban planning sectors. The delegation organized a number of visits to meet with officials and representatives of the various relevant agencies in the public and private sectors. Also they distributed questionnaires to nationals and residents at the governorate during their one month stay.
OCCI mulls trade cooperation with the Philippines

Ayman bin Abdullah al-Hassani, deputy chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, for economic Affairs and branches, met with a delegation of Philippine businessmen. The meeting was attended by the Director General of the Chamber. They discussed the ways to enhance trade and economic relations with the Republic of the Philippines and actions to raise the volume of trade exchange between the two countries.

Hassani welcomed the Philippine delegation describing the trade and economic relations between the two countries and the possibility of its promotion and provisions from both sides. The visiting delegation thanked chamber for its reception and organizing bilateral meetings with the Omani side, stressing that the visit would provide both sides with the opportunity to benefit from the Omani market and will provide opportunities for the formation of business partnerships between both parties. Also the delegation extended their invitation to OCCI to participate in the exhibition of food stuffs, organized by the Philippines next year.

German delegation seeks cooperation with OCCI

Engineer Redha bin Juma Al Saleh, Vice Chairman for Administrative and Financial Affairs, OCCI explained that the chamber gives special consideration to SMEs as they are the core of any economy. He added that recognizing the experiences of developed countries in considering this vital sector and methods of its development is crucial without doubt. This was during a visit of a German delegation, consisting of a number of businessmen and businesswomen representing different sectors, to the Chamber.

The members of the German delegation met with a number of officials of the Chamber and a number of businessmen and businesswomen in the Sultanate. There was an introduction on activities and scope of entrepreneurs from both sides. They also discussed the opportunities and advantages of investments in the two countries. Discussions were held on the growing importance of the free economic zones in the Sultanate, forefront of which is free economic zone at Duqm which acquires special consideration as an important logistical hub.

Engineer Al Saleh pointed out that trade relations between Oman and Germany are very old. Though these relations evolve and grow over time, the two sides possess many opportunities to improve and develop these relations commensurate with the size of the potential and the resources available in both countries. He added that the chamber will have every effort for the success of the task of the German delegation in the Sultanate and provide all means of support regarding the promotion of trade and the possibility of finding possible partnerships with the German delegation.

Members of the German delegation emphasized the importance of intensifying the exchange of trade delegations among the two sides in future because of its importance in strengthening and revitalizing the business sector and they extended their invitation to the Omani side to visit Germany, especially the Federal State of Saxony to which the delegation belongs.

Real Estate Committee discusses Brokerage Law

Second meeting of the committee for real estate development was held, presided by Dr. Ibrahim bin Baqer Al Ajmi, Chairman of the Committee, in the presence of members of the Committee at Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry's head quarter building, to discuss the Committee's objectives, future plans and mechanism of advancement in the real estate sector.

The proposal for real estate broker card was reviewed. The idea of this card comes with implementation of some terms undergoing to a period of training which is compulsory for issuing the card to the Broker in the real estate sector. Presently this idea is under the study of the committee so that it can be adopted and implemented on the real ground.

Chairman of the Committee and members pointed out to the need for coordination with the pertinent authorities to work on the implementation of the Royal Decree with regard to regularizing the real estate market, at the earliest, in order to develop real estate brokerage market on its right track, and to restore the confidence of clients with this market and the dealers.

They also discussed the geographical real estate apps for smart phones which can be adopted by the National Center for Statistics and Information in coordination with OCCI and the Real Estate Committee.
Ad Dakhiliya Delegation Visits Iran

OCCI Ad Dakhiliya Branch arranged a visit of an Omani trade delegation to the Islamic Republic of Iran, which lasted for five days. The delegation’s program was in Mazandaran province, at northern Iran, where they held extensive meetings with the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Mazandaran, in the presence of members of the Omani delegation and a large gathering of owners and representatives of Iranian companies. Sheikh Ibrahim ben Said an-Nabhani, head of Omani delegation and head of Iran Chamber of Commerce & Industries at Mazandaran, exchanged pleasantries and reviewed the historical and commercial relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Islamic Republic of Iran. They stressed the importance of the development of trade and commercial cooperation and opening up of investment opportunities between both parties.

The Omani delegation conducted meetings with representatives of the Iranian companies which enabled many of the members of the Omani delegation to have initial understandings to come out with mutual transactions and investments in future in the fields of industries, food security, import and export and commercial agencies. His Excellency the Governor of Mazandaran organized an official reception for members of the Omani delegation, which began with welcome speech of His Excellency, the Governor of Mazandaran, which touched the depth of historical relations and common links between the two countries, dated back to the roots of the history between the Sultanate of Oman and Islamic Republic of Iran. In his turn, the Head of Omani Delegation, Sheikh Ibrahim al-Nabhani, thanked them for the warm reception and hospitality, stressing that the visit would provide an opportunity for both sides to take advantage of the experience and create economic and investment partnerships in order to increase the volume of trade and work to exploit opportunities among themselves.

Among the program of the visit and in the area of food security the Omani trade delegation visited the production plants of Kala Industries at Mazandaran, exchanged pleasantries and reviewed the development of bilateral relations and attract investments in economic and trade areas that come within the common goals between the two parties.

The delegation visited steel factories, specialized in fabrication of steel structures, and roofings in different shapes. Also the delegation visited factory of the North Engineering and Industries Co., specialized in production of equipment, and electrical switchgears used in oil field. The delegation concluded its field visits at factory of Sawin Co. for carpets, which produces the best of its kind by using high quality modern technologies.

At the end of this program, the delegation has toured cities and tourist landmarks in Mazandaran province, and witnessed the unique historical and tourist features of this province.

The results of the visit were assessed by conducting a meeting wherein, MoUs were signed between many of the delegation members and Iranian Companies, which were in the field of mutual cooperation and trade exchange. Also Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, province of Mazandaran, [signed by Mr. Gholam Reza Ashrifya, Chairman of the Chamber, on behalf of the Iranian side], and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Oman Ad Dakhiliya Branch, [signed on behalf of the Omani side by Sheikh Ibrahim bin Saeed Al Nabhani] so as to promote the development of bilateral relations and attract investments in economic and trade areas that come within the common goals between the two parties.

Real Estate Development Committee for forming Task Forces

Committee for Real Estate Development and Contracts of OCCI Branch at Al Buraimi Governorate held its third meeting this year headed by Rashid bin Musallam al-Badi as-Suwaidi in presence of the members. During the meeting the agenda was reviewed and the minutes of previous meeting has been approved in addition to the follow-up of tasks of team formed by the Committee to discuss the development of an integrated strategy on the Committee’s work plan for the coming period.

The committee agreed to form a special task force consisting of members to develop a specific action plan for the real estate sector and another task force to focus on the contracting sector in order to arrive at a comprehensive vision for these two sectors, enhanced by programs and action plans for the development of labor standards and to raise the level of quality and efficiency in the real estate and construction sector, in coordination with the relevant authorities in the government and private sectors.

There was talk on some challenges faced by the contracting sector in the Governorate, including replication and copying of construction drawings and not taking into account the differences and minute details depended upon the volume of construction and difference in quantities of building materials used for each building or property according to its size and design.

Chairman of the Committee emphasized on the importance of the developmental and service role assigned to the Committee of OCCI for the real estate development and contracts, calling upon all members to redouble their efforts and activate their roles to participate in the support and development of the areas of work in this sector, which is one of the key economic sectors in the Sultanate.
Career Opportunities with Etihad Airways

The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry branch in Al Buraimi Governorate witnessed on 29th of October 2014 conducting written tests for about 200 candidates for many vacancies of ground hostess and call center staff in Etihad Airways, the official airline of the United Arab Emirates. The candidates selected after passing the written tests and personal interviews which will be held in this year itself, will be appointed in the company.

These tests are a continuation of the existing cooperation between the company and the Directorate of Manpower Branch in Al Buraimi Governorate and OCCI branch in Al Buraimi Governorate. This is the third time this year in the governorate that UAE's Etihad Airways provides career opportunities for Omani cadres of both genders.

Sheikh Butti Bin Mohammed Al Neyadi, chairman of the Chamber's branch in Al Buraimi Governorate has confirmed the leading role the company plays in the employment of Omanis in various administrative and technical levels and also the high confidence that the officials of the company have shown to Omani cadres, praising at the same time the cooperation between the company and the branch and the Directorate of Manpower in the governorate, which resulted so far in employment of more than 40 persons [male and female] at the company during the year.

Also Niyadi valued the efforts by Etihad Airways in the rehabilitation, training and employment of young cadres from the Gulf Cooperation Council, which reflects the complementary roles between institutions and companies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and enhances the Gulf partnership.

Tests were supervised by Ahmed bin Khalifa Al Maqrashi, Head for Employment and Employees Welfare in Al Buraimi Governorate, Masoud bin Rashid Al Alayani, legal research scholar and Samia Al Hashimiya, employee at Manpower Department along with a number of officials of Etihad Airways and the staff of the Chamber's branch in Al Buraimi Governorate.

OCCI sends delegation to Spain

OCCI has deputed a trade delegation to the Kingdom of Spain that comprises 15 businessmen and businesswomen representing major enterprises and companies in private sector and some representatives of the leading governmental institutions in the Sultanate.

This trend is a part of OCCI’s efforts to expand the circle of beneficiaries of delegations sent to the various countries of the world. HE Said Bin Saleh Al Kiyumi, Board Chairman of OCCI confirmed that the chamber is at the service of all the Omani private sector enterprises, without exception, from the largest enterprises working in the Sultanate to the smallest.

This visit is meant for senior companies and enterprise in pursuit of OCCI to diversify its services and concerns to all of its affiliated members. Concerning the large companies, OCCI have recently given its special importance through establishment of a department for their interests and services, as it is known that the chamber had conducted a lot of business delegations of the small and medium enterprises since the beginning of the year as part of an initiative ‘Participate with us to advance’.

His Excellency explained that as part of keenness of OCCI to develop and strengthen bilateral relations between the Sultanate and the Kingdom of Spain in various fields of investment and economy and to take advantage of the Spanish expertise and technology, both parties have coordinated each other on setting out this delegation, which includes a group of senior businessmen and businesswomen and representatives of some government institutions which will hold gathering and bilateral meetings, from which, we hope, the delegation will benefit as much as possible.

The delegation will be accompanied by a media team specialised in audio-visual and electronic coverage. The program includes B2B bilateral meetings between the two parties, as well as meetings with officials in the Supreme Council of Spanish Chambers during which a memorandum of Understanding will be signed by Oman Chamber of Commerce and industry (OCCI) and the Union of Spanish chambers. Then a seminar will be conducted regarding the opportunities and investment climate in the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Spain. On second day the delegation will visit Madrid airport and major railway stations and meet with officials therein. They will also visit to major global Spanish companies specialized in the field of technology.

Kiyumi pointed out that OCCI's aim through these delegation is to introduce the investment climate in the Sultanate to attract foreign investment and to benefit from the experiences of other countries, as well as moving to global markets to activate commercial and industrial movement and to intensify the methods to define the laws governing the investment climate in the Sultanate.
Zubair SEC incubates projects with social impact

Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) towards supporting four Omani entrepreneurs who have designed an innovative mobile application to meet social needs.

The project “OTaxi” – standing for Omani Online Taxi Services – is carefully designed to cater for the needs of multiple stakeholders; it would solve a common challenge for people requiring a taxi drive or need to prepare for their lift in advance. “OTaxi” would also help subscribed taxi drivers to increase demand on their services, save on fuel spent while driving empty, and become more time efficient.

The four Omani young men – Faisal Al Munthiri, As’ad Al Breiki, Sameer Al M’amari, Hasan Al Kamzari - are members of SAS Centre for Entrepreneurship, which is established by the Information Technology Authority (ITA). They have recently won the SAS 48H competition for the mobile application developed within 48 hours. They have proven remarkable performance and dedication, as commended by SAS team, which encouraged Zubair SEC to extend special incubation and business advisory services to further help the masterminds of OTaxi achieve their goals.

As part of the MoU, Zubair SEC will incubate OTaxi team and extend to them all needed business advisory, coaching, and mentorship. While OTaxi team will enjoy the many benefits of Zubair SEC’s membership, special attention will be given to them through the Centre’s ecosystem to help them materialize their project and run it on the desired scale.

Mitsubishi Sponsors Saif Al Harthy

Mitsubishi, represented in Oman by the General Automotive Company, has announced a new partnership to support renowned Omani rally driver Saif Al Harthy for the balance of the 2014 racing season. The comprehensive sponsorship agreement from Mitsubishi will encompass all parts and service costs for Saif Al Harthy’s rally car, a Mitsubishi Evolution X, for the remainder of the season.

Saif Al Harthy is a well-known driver in Oman’s Rally scene, developed his passion for racing from a very early age thanks to from his father, who was also a former Rally driver. He began his racing career in 1998 and came in ranked fourth overall in the following year. Taking an eight-year hiatus from racing to complete his education, Saif returned to the sport in 2008 behind the wheel of an Evolution VIII; upgrading it to a state-of-the-are Evolution X in 2012. He has since earned a place as one of the leading rally drivers in Oman, even placing first amongst the contingent of 15 Omani racing teams in the recently held Oman International Rally.

NBO hails HM’s Address

National Bank of Oman [NBO] hailed His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said’s address on national television by adorning branches with Omani flags and pictures and serving Omani sweets to customers.

His Majesty’s words spread joy and excitement amongst NBO employees throughout the Sultanate. By bringing joy and hope across the full spectrum of society, His Majesty’s stirring speech has inspired the staff in every department of the Bank to voice their affection in the branches and on the Bank’s social media pages.

Ahmed Al Musalmi, NBO’s Chief Executive Officer said: “We were overjoyed to see His Majesty’s address to the nation on national television. We pray for His Majesty’s continued good health and well-being. With His Majesty’s wisdom and guidance our nation has a bright future, full of prosperity for many years to come.”
City Centre Concludes ‘Art of C’ Initiative

After more than a week of unleashing the creativity of Oman's finest artists and an inspiring group of local talents from the community, Majid Al Futtaim and City Centre Malls' ‘Art of C’ community arts initiative concluded with a Closing Ceremony that celebrated the diversity and richness of the Sultanate's thriving art's culture.

Hosted under the patronage of His Excellency Abdullah Shaban Al-Farsi, Head of Administrative and Financial Affairs, Diwan of Royal Court, City Centre Qurum Senior Mall Manager Watfa Humaid Al Harthy and City Centre Muscat, Senior Mall Manager Husam Al Mandhari and the President of the Omani Society for Fine Arts Maryam Al Zadjali, the official ceremony paid tribute to the workmanship of all participants, and recognised the three artists who demonstrated the most artistry and creativity.

Yousuf Al Rawahi (first prize), Samar Al Kaabi (second prize), and Bushra Al Zuhaimi (third prize) were revealed as the three final winners, after a careful judging process steered by the Omani Society for Fine Arts. While all participants were congratulated for their inspired works, these particular emerging artists displayed a unique passion and potential in their art that stood above the rest.

Winners were awarded with RO 1,000, RO 750 and RO 500 respectively, in addition to being praised by some of the most celebrated artists within the Sultanate.

Throughout the ‘Art of C’ creative workshops, which took place live at City Centre Qurum and City Centre Muscat, 35 emerging artists including talented students and housewives were given an opportunity to be mentored under the guidance of the Sultanate’s most prominent artists. The result was a mosaic of decorative pieces of C-shaped artwork, some of which will remain on display in City Centre Qurum and City Centre Muscat to further promote the local arts culture.

Meethaq wins Global Islamic Finance Award

Meethaq, the Islamic banking from Bank Muscat, has won a prestigious award in recognition of its pioneering role and contributions to Islamic banking in Oman. The ‘Upcoming Personality in Islamic Finance 2014’ award by Global Islamic Finance was conferred on Sulaiman Al Harthy, Group General Manager, Islamic Banking, at the awards ceremony in Dubai.

Meethaq accounts for approximately 50 per cent share in financing of the total Islamic banking market in Oman as at June 2014. The financing portfolio touched RO 358 million in June 2014, another first in the industry in Oman. Meethaq also achieved the highest deposit base of more than RO 179 million as at 30 June 2014. The bank posted profit after tax of more than RO 6 million in the first year of operation in 2013. During the first half (H1) of 2014, the profit after tax stood at RO 3.9 million.

Meethaq has a strong network of nine branches along with ATM/CDMs spread across Oman. The bank also maintains a large network of correspondent banks, including leading international banks. It offers a full suite of Islamic banking products. The Shari'a compliant products and services include savings account, current account, home finance, auto finance, credit card, mobile banking etc.

Sulaiman Al Harthy is a seasoned banker with more than 30 years of experience in Corporate, Retail and Islamic banking. He has been associated with Bank Muscat since July 2005.

Bank Sohar Hosts Investor Forum at MSM

Bank Sohar hosted a special Investor’s meet at the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) in order to highlight its recently released Q3 financial results. The meet provided attendees with an opportunity to review the recently released financial results, as well as providing a forum for investors to discuss any clarifications they might have on the nine-month financial results.

The meeting was addressed by members of the executive Management Team at the Bank including Mr. Rashad Ali Al Musafir, Acting CEO, Ms. Munira Abdulnabi Macki, DGM of HR and Corporate Support, Mr. Sasi Kumar, DGM and Head of Strategy and Corporate Business Division, Mr. Salim Khani Al Maskeri, Senior AGM Branches, Mr. Abdulali Al Lawati, Board Secretary, Mr. Nadeem Iqbal, AGM and Head of Compliance, and Mr. G. Rajasekaran, Acting CFO.

As per its recently announced financial results at the end of Q3 2014, the bank’s net profit soared by 31.14 per cent to RO 23.749mn compared to RO 18.110mn in Q3 2013. The operating income increased by 24.39 per cent to RO 53.262mn in Q3 2014 compared to RO 42.817mn in Q3 2013. The Bank’s total assets grew from RO 1.849bn in 2013 to RO 1.854bn in the same period this year, a growth of 0.29 per cent.

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The skies of the Sultanate shined with the falling lights of the 18th November anniversary with the nation announcing with jubilation the beginning of festivities marking the 44th Glorious National Day. The hearts were beating with emotions, the eyes were glittering with tears and the moonlight gleamed on the waters of Oman while receiving the glad tidings from the builder of our renaissance, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, May Allah preserve and protect him.

The reassuring words that were spoken to us by His Majesty the Sultan demonstrate the high spirit of love, affection, care and Royal paternity that our great leader treasures for his loyal people. These words reflected the value of His Majesty’s nobleness, generous sympathy and appreciation to the Omani nation and its people.

The remarkable day of the 5th of November will remain forever in the memory of our glorious nation since it was the day when the impatiently waiting people of Oman saw the glorious picture of His Majesty on the screens and were reassured on His Majesty’s health. With our faithful souls and loyal attitudes, we will continue to humbly pray to the Almighty Allah to bestow upon his Majesty robust health and long life to further maintain the gains of security and stability in our dear nation.

Since November is the month of good turns and cheerfulness, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry took part in the nation’s festivities by organizing the “Business Opportunities Forum” which featured an economic event involving the finance and business community and constituted a platform for small and medium enterprises to engage in such a gathering amid an intensive international presence.

Contracts worth millions of Omani Rials were signed and investment opportunities for future contracts worth millions of Omani Rials were also offered during that forum. The contracts and figures were such a surprise to both the participants and stakeholders, but there is no doubt that they demonstrated that the focus was on building strong relationship between large and small companies. Ironically speaking, a business owner who participated in the first edition of the forum looking for an investment opportunity turned out to be offering investment opportunities himself, thus benefiting a number of citizens. A job-seeking visitor of the forum was also fortunate to rather sign a genuine investment opportunity that he has never expected. God bless those people who planned, perceived, managed and prepared for the forum and made such an event an outstanding success.