SULTAN QABOOS INDUSTRIAL EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR 2015

Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel, and Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO) won the awards for the large companies’ category and Bin Salim Enterprises won the Award for the medium companies’ category.
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Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) was established on 15 May 1973 as a public utility organization.

Vision:
To develop the Omani private sector and to make it a key partner in the sustainable economic development.

Mission:
The Chamber is the official representative of the Omani private sector both at domestic and international level, as well as its active tool in participating in taking all the decisions pertaining to the sector. The Chamber is keen to support, develop and improve the private sector through the tools and programs available for advancing economic development in the Sultanate.
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OMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
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The presence of qualified national cadres is considered as one of the most important factors that enable the achievement of bringing the national employees replacing expatriates in management positions.

The replacement of these positions is no longer a difficult thing. The national outputs, as certified by everyone, have high efficiency and possess the skills that will enable them to exercise these roles. What this interprets is a great success that comes true in banking and insurance sectors with respect to Omanization, as the companies operated in these two sectors, in addition to the companies operating in petroleum field have to implement Omanization with greater percentages which cannot be achieved unless they believe in the talents of national cadres, and they cannot continue their success story unless these outputs have proven their competence in the real ground.

The other economic sectors can benefit from the experience of banking, insurance and oil sectors with respect to the commitments with the training and rehabilitation of national cadres so that they can make progress parallel to what has been accomplished in these sectors and give more confidence to the people of this country to be able to serve their country in an optimal manner. Also we do not overlook the importance of links between the policies, programs of education and needs of labor market.
Cover Story

OCCI 2016

AMBITIONS UNLIMITED
Under the leadership of the current board of directors, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry has developed an ambitious plan with specific goals and clear features to conduct its business during the current year 2016, moving to a new phase of work in the private sector service so as to enhance the prestige of the Chamber as the official representative of the sector, and to ensure the lifting of the contribution of the Omani private sector in national income, particularly in these circumstances that require the concerted efforts of all sectors.

- As a strategic player in the Omani economy field, and a pulpit the private sector turns to.
- An ambitious action plan, a race against time for electronic transformation.
- Special Director for Foreign Investment under the direct supervision of the Chairman of the Chamber.
- 35 seconds to renew membership, ratification of certificates of origin in less than two minutes
How do we make a quantum leap for the Chamber so as to become a strategic player in the Omani economy, and a platform to which private sector turn and even on which they rely to make their voices reach to state decision-makers? That were the initial discussions during the meetings of the Board of Directors of the Chamber for the current year, which was held under the chairmanship of HE Saeed Bin Saleh Al Kiyumi, Chairman of the Board, who commenced the meeting with sincere prayers that Almighty Allah may save His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, both in his stay at home and during his travels, He may extend his further mercy towards him with health and prosperity, and called them for more interaction and communication and the continuity of the communication and contribution, as they are source of strength for the Chamber. Also he thanked the executive body for their significant efforts.

Vision of the Chamber for this year includes that regard to facilitating the procedures, the digital switching to electronically completion of the procedures of the companies registered in the Chamber, without the need to attend the Chamber, as it will be possible to provide services of registration, renewal and certification electronically via several methods as follows:

- Website of the Chamber
- Chamber Apps in smart phones
- Self service devices

**Website of Chamber**

The website of the Chamber shall be developed as it can be browsed by the smart phones as well. The site map will focus on the four main sectors, the same sectors that were focused by the government in the 2040 strategy, which include investment sector and related laws and regulations, and investment
opportunities, incentives, and procedures etc. in addition to the manufacturing sector and also related laws, regulations, incentives and information about free economic zones and industrial zones. The third sector is tourism and everything related to tourism like laws, regulations and incentives, investment opportunities and tourist services, in addition to the trade and services sector. The site will be, in the beginning, available in Arabic and English, and later on other languages will be added like German, French, Hindi and Persian. The site also have spaces dedicated for advertisement of companies in order to promote them.

Self-Service Machines
The Chamber is considering two options to offer to renew membership for the Chamber, the first choice is to introduce self-service devices, at the beginning, with three experimental outlets in shopping centers in Muscat, and later they will be extended to all governorates of the Sultanate. The second option is renewal through the website of Chamber which is undergoing a comprehensive development process in collaboration with a specialist company in this field.

These services will be available for the companies registered with OCCI for completing their procedure, over 24 hours, and will save a lot of their time and effort, as the Chamber has taken into account of the importance of the time element in business.

Studies, Research and Economy
OCII seeks, during the next short period of time, to become a reference for Research and Economic Studies. In order to achieve this it will work on feeding Research and Economic Studies Department with competencies specialized in this field so as to provide updated data and accurate analysis of economic situation in the Sultanate and the global economic status. These
studies will be available in the website for interested people to take its advantage.

Legal Consultancies
The Chamber will be expanded to provide commercial, economic and legal consultancies for business owners. The legal consulting service will be also available through the website of the Chamber, so that the consultee can post his enquiries in the website and receive replies within a short period.

Muscat Commercial Arbitration Center
The Chamber has come out to set up Muscat Commercial Arbitration Center. The Statute of the Center has been finalized and preparation of the rules and regulations of the center is in progress. The centre is hoped to contribute to settling commercial disputes easily, which will complement the legislative environment in the Sultanate. It is a dedication for purview assigned to the Chamber in the business economy.

New media identity
Within the Chamber’s plan for the current year, comes building a media and marketing identity for the Chamber, and defining the role of the Chamber for its registered companies as many overlook the roles assigned to the Chamber and the services provided to the sector. With respect to media, presenting a positive image of the private sector was assigned to the department of media and publication in OCCI, which has failed to do justice to it, and it did not gain media attention as it should be. Highlighting the role of large companies and their efforts in the field of social responsibility will be assigned to it.

Also the Chamber intends this year to strengthen its presence by means of social communication, and it will allocate a specialist section in this aspect at the Department of Media and Publishing for the purpose of getting closer to the pulse of the street and achieve greater prevalence among young - the sect who use these medias most widely, and bring the business environment for them to approach, contributing to the steering of their orientation towards self-projects.

Comes within the plan for the development of performance and media presence for the Chamber, allocation of special division for Radio and Television at the Department of the media and publishing. Regarding ‘Al Ghorfa’ magazine, it shall be in its new gown under the name of «economic» which will address all economic issues, contain coverages of economic mobility in
the Sultanate, introduce small and medium-sized projects, and provide necessary support and promotion so as to help their growth and sustainability.

New Building for OCCI
Thanks to the wise government that provided land in Bousher for OCCI, OCCI management is working in the coming period to complete the procedures for constructing new building there for OCCI. The new building will be equipped according to the latest technical specifications that meet the needs of business owners and investors, as the building will include administrative offices, multi purpose halls and lounges in addition to modern technology systems to speed up, with quality, the services provided to business owners.

Foreign Investment Department
Comes within the Chamber’s objectives for this year to attract foreign investment and capital to the country and for that the Board of Directors of the Chamber wishes to entrust one of Directors at the office of HE Chairman of the Chamber, under his direct supervision, with serving the strategic foreign investors who resort to the Chamber to facilitate the establishment of their projects, and expedite the completion of transactions of these projects, in coordination and cooperation with related government agencies.

Trade delegations
The Chamber was and is still believing in the great importance of sending and receiving trade delegations. It worked during the last period to pursue specialized team in most delegations that have been sent so as the members can take its advantage at maximum. The Chamber has experienced success in this field as some visits yielded for great deals and joint commercial ventures. The Chamber wishes to continue to send these delegations. During the coming period, it will send delegations to the Federal Republic of Germany, the People’s Republic of China, Sri Lanka, and the United Republic of Tanzania, and others.

His Excellency the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Chamber stressed that this institution is going with confident steps, despite challenges it faced and is facing. Thanks to the trust given by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, may God protect him, and the trust of its members, it will be at the forefront to serve the Omani economy and it will remain as the platform for the Omani private sector with all its categories.
IN HER FATHER’S FOOTSTEPS

- I’m not at loggerheads with the Chamber at all, and I believe in its genuine partnership with the private sector.
- My father is my greatest ideal, I follow him in the refinement of my personality as an entrepreneur.

Interview by: Zamzam Al Hanai

Guest of this issue of Al Ghorfa Magazine is a successful and enterprising businesswoman. She made her own way that she fashioned through her own efforts and perseverance till she won the position she sought for and she achieved the success without any second opinion. She has been rated by Forbes Arabia, among the top 50 most powerful businesswomen for more than once. She says about this listing: It is a beacon of pride. Regarding her teaching at the university she says: Teaching at the university is a sublime message and commitment. Lujaina Mohsin Haider Darwish, Chairman of MHD group, is through the below lines.

Lujaina held several positions since her graduation, from the lecturer at the Faculty of Literature at the University of Sultan Qaboos to the entrepreneur and member of the Shura Council, then member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber. About her illustrious career and her closest position, she says:

Working as a lecturer at the Faculty of Literature at Sultan Qaboos University was my first career after graduation. It has earned me many skills, as well as the privilege of contributing to the development of Omani human intelligences and building academic outcomes that contribute to the development and prosperity of the beloved homeland. Teaching at the University is a sublime message and commitment, and it is an unforgettable phase in my life. This stage prepared me to engage in the business of my father’s group companies. This was what made me to prefer to begin a business career from the beginning of job hierarchy in order to gain practical experiences and application of all academic studies that I had. So I joined the Department of Personnel and Omanization. I stepped up through the career ladder. I also engaged in public work through civil society institutions and participated in the charitable and voluntary associations, sports and social clubs. I palpated my way for public services in the widest door through my candidacy for membership of the Shura Council and effective contribution in different social and economic issues as a reward to favours of this lovely generous country, and what is laying on our shoulders and as a service to the paternal Omani community, and strengthening the wise and prudent policies of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, may God protect him, who has established a full-fledged state through the renaissance that included the entire Sultanate.
My participation and election to the Shura Council was for the promotion of all these achievements made by the blessed Renaissance. No wonder that my membership in the Board of Directors of the Chamber comes in a framework with the objectives. So my participation in the Chamber was to achieve the desired goals for promoting business in the Sultanate of Oman through opening horizons for Omani commercial companies, to move towards the global ones through the exchange of experiences with international firms and find channels of communication with their counterparts from international companies and Chambers of commerce in other countries by organizing events of global trade delegations, regular versions, and the introduction of attractive and stable economic climate in the Sultanate in order to attract international companies to invest in strategic projects and vital services in the Sultanate and attract foreign capital.

In the midst of all these diverse and different experiences and experiments, I find myself in all these aspects as long as they serve all of us in the framework of the service and public benefit to society and the national economy of Oman, and I see that I should pour all my practical and scholastic experiences and
experiments and exploit them in the interests of the country.

Among all of these duties and positions, did any side dominate another in your life?

Many people may believe that the multiplicity of duties and positions that I undertake may be at the expense of other aspects in my life. This is not true. Praise be to Allah, I have possessed good time management and the arrangement of priorities since childhood. So I followed a thorough and rigorous system in dividing and managing my time between all these tasks so as not to overwhelm one of them or affect any other tasks, including duties, family responsibilities and social obligations towards the large family and manage as well.

You won two consecutive terms in the Shura Council (2001–2007). What are the issues you cared to raise during that period?

Through my election to the Shura Council for two consecutive terms, I was keen to raise and support the issues of Omani women and youth in particular, considering that the blessed Renaissance have given Omani women very precious gains by allowing women to participate in all aspects of political, economic and social life. Thanks to all of these gains due to the vision and governance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, may God protect him. I think I am one of the first women elected and participated in political works through the Shura Council. It was worthy and apt for me to work focusing on and enhancing these earnings by raising issues of women and bringing them out for discussion. This does not necessarily mean that I am not interested in other vital issues, including economic, social, and those represent the vital and strategic issues.

You got an advanced rating in the list of Forbes Arabia for the top 50 prominent and influential businesswomen more than once, and similar titles and awards from several magazines and other institutions. How do you consider this rating?

I have been selected to be in the list of the most important, notable and influential businesswomen for more than once as well as I got my numerous awards regional and global titles only in the framework of that the Omani women hold high prestige not only at the regional level but also at the global level. This selection and this honor come to the Omani woman in my self. But it is also a victory and pride to the nation, not just to me. All these are by perseverance and diligence to uphold the beloved homeland of Oman in all regional and international fora, and therefore it is a victory and pride to the nation before it becomes a beacon of personal pride to me. This selection and honor has put upon my shoulder heavy responsibilities to maintain this position and to be on the extent and status of this selection, but to make extra effort to achieve higher ratings and advanced ranks globally.

Some deduce from the lack of your presence and involvement in activities and events, that you are at loggerheads with the Chamber. What is your comment?

I’m not at loggerheads with the Chamber at all. I do not know from where the sense of presence of loggerheads with the
Chamber came out, but the reality is quite opposite. I am in constant contact with the Chamber believing in the pioneering role of the Chamber and its genuine partnership with the private sector. This active role of the Chamber pulls the wheel of Omani national economy and actively contributes in building a good investment climate for the private sector. I confirm that I still fully and effectively communicate with the Chamber.

The Chamber faces ignorance from the private sector institutions from one side, and conversely the business community does not consider the Chamber as their true representative. In your opinion, which of the two statements is the fact?
The private sector institutions are not ignoring the Chamber and its active role, and the business community is not considering the Chamber as their true representative. There is no truth in both statements as per my personal assessment. The Chamber and the business community are in well established and stable partnership, although there are some shortcomings from both sides in stimulating this partnership further. There is a deficiency in bridging the continuous communication between the two parties, and in my humble opinion, more effective communications should be done by joint interactive programs instead of satisfying only with seminars, publications and coordination of foreign delegations visits, because the business owners must be engaged more in the fundamental issues related to the formulation of laws and regulations with respect to business, and more interactive programs are to be organized.

Production triangle: Fully integrated relationship
Whether the private sector is the weakest link in the relationship between production triangle with the labor union, and the government, she says:

In my opinion, the ribs of production triangle viz., the government, the private sector and the trade union are in fully integrated relationship, complementing each other to achieve the objectives of efficiency and increase production. Let me explain the experience of MHD group in this regard, which I have the honor of being at the top of its structural pyramid. Following the decision to establish representative committees for staff (according to the old naming), the group initiated immediately to build the atmosphere for employees to establish their representative committees. The relationship was very effective in creating a work environment conducive to increase production of the group, and even creating a distinctive work environment for employees and therefore the integration of work with the trade unions had a profound impact in forming the conditions and atmosphere for the appropriate work environment.

Thus, these all imply that the integrated work between the government, union workers and the private sector contributes effectively in pushing the wheel of production, but it all depends on the need to understand the role of each party of the ribs of this triangle and work jointly towards achieving the general and supreme objectives of the State.

The formula for success
Success in any business is achieved through diligence and perseverance, proper planning, and deliberation and not rushing for the immediate results. It is not a secret formula, but are the basic rules for success. So my advice to all entrepreneurs who want to engage in business to follow these basic rules that I mentioned. Also they should not focus only on the side of profits, as far as what they should focus on the basic rules of trade including the integrity and credibility in their businesses, in addition to the focus on building a reputation and also focus on the quality of products or services offered. The most important pillar of the business is customers or customer service. This is the basic criterion for the success of any sustainable business.

Father: Best example and role model
The experience of my beloved father in the field of trade and business are well-established one, and I consider him as a leading and independent school in the field of business. His distinct signature in this regard made him a role mode. Of course he is my best ideal and I am following him and walking in his footsteps, not only in business, but in all walks of life. Through out my work with my father in the group of companies, I was privileged to learn a lot from him, and confer on him all the credit in the fine-tuning of my personality as a pioneer entrepreneur. I attribute all successes achieved on the practical level and trade to the experience of my father. It is truly an enriching experience. Of course, The experience what I received from him inadvertently prepared me to lead the helm of the group as a chairperson. Of course I have added to the experiences gained from my father through scholastic and practical qualifications and I still qualify myself in this field enhancing the business and moving into world-class status.

Away from work
I like reading too much and traveling, because it is of great benefit. I spend most of my time in social work and public service.
Small Business

Interview by: Ibrahim Al Julandani

SMES are considered the backbone of economic development and upon it relies a lot of major economies in the world, and many governments are giving the institutions of this sector great importance and high priority. This is what we perceived in addresses of His Majesty, Sultan Qaboos bin Said - may God protect him with good health and prosperity - and his trust in young people for starting investments in the market and not to let opportunities pass without exploiting. He noted in one of his speeches that the ball is in the court of young people.

Of the most beautiful thing on which small and medium enterprises stand is the determination and desire to succeed and progress in this way. Through the columns of Al Ghorfa we introduce people with ambitions who shaped their own world in private institutions that they manage. In this issue we host Inas Khamis Al Amiriyah, Deputy Executive Director and marketing in-charge in Rawand Est. She begins saying: No ambitious person will leave his/her own business once he/she receives good source of income, but it will prompt him/her for make his/her establishment reach to the level of government jobs and even beyond. She added: We may observe words of some successful people, like Mr. Omar Samra, founder of Wild Guanabana as he said: “People advise you to keep your job and start your company in parallel, if I had done that with my job, I probably would have failed because I would not have devoted enough time for my company.

This Establishment, Rawand, began in the competition of Enjaz Oman’s My Company 2013 as we did our business at the Sultan Qaboos University. All staff in the company were students at the University. And after the competition we started planning for building a headquarter and finding investments, economic feasibility and plans for what we aspire.

We have worked initially to continue this company that was established as part of participating in «My Company» contest at Sultan Qaboos University, and we decided to continue the journey and that the company be present on the ground of reality. We initially determined the basic requirements through a feasibility study for the project and method of its development to be able to compete in the Omani market.

First impression
We have our story regarding our selection of company’s logo. The logo or the conceptual image of the institution is one of the fundamentals of each project and is the first impression. The pyramid at the top of the logo represents right and strong construction of the company from the bottom and up the summit, and then comes whale’s tail, which in turn denotes and distinguish us from others since the whale’s tail is as the fingerprint in humans. The tree leaves indicate the team as a whole, as the tree is a group of leaves in comparison to the company which is a group of employees working shoulder to shoulder.

Man of ambition is seeking to advance with the institution...

Inas Al Amiriyah: Investing in talents returns material and moral benefits for the person and the establishment.

Interview by: Ibrahim Al Julandani

Rawand & Lining up of Grapes
The grape as a whole means to the name of the company, Rawand, a Persian term meaning a rope that ties grape grains in a bunch.

Integrated Cell for a single goal
Rawand Company believes that investment of talents is the best one that returns great benefits to the company. So we formed various divisions, each according to its preferences and specialization that will meet all of them eventually to the concept of technology that brings us together. The company comprises Rawand department store, which in turn provides a variety of electronic devices and accessories of phones and cameras. Also we added a section devoted for special gifts orders in large quantities-named as Rawand Gifts- to provide the needs of institutions and some university groups, and as a practical application of the technology, we have formed Rawand studio, which includes photography, editing, design, and audio recording. All these departments operate as an integrated cell under the management of Rawand Company.

Ambitions and goals
Being a small establishment and the limits of our ambition is far, we always plan in different, non-traditional ways. We always gather together to specify our current place and we draw the road and the track. We define in our meetings the difficulties that we faced and determine its methods of solution, and often come up with new ideas and ways to raise the level of production. So we in Rawand, always focus on the marketing side and financial organization for walking with confident footsteps. Therefore, we aim to create a favorable environment for the work of all departments, provide all the functional needs and avoid obstacles they may face. Also the company has long-term objectives, such as to have more than one branch in more than one location. We also began the launch of some online services, including receiving business and orders and our customers need not come to our shops and our customers will satisfy by communicating with us electronically.

Tools of Success
On the most important tools of success of Rawand Est. Al Amiriyah says: Successful marketing is what distinguishes Rawand Company as we work together to find a distinctive marketing solutions for all departments, whether it is the field marketing or electronics. Also our being at the headquarters in one location helps us for the permanent cooperation on the achievement of business of each department, one of the reasons of our success.

Educational institutions to build and produce
Inas Al Amiriyah added: Sultan Qaboos University had the prominent role in providing the first opportunity wherein was the throes of the company and its birth through My Company contest in 2013. It has provided us with the right atmosphere and proper roads, in the beginning, to do self-projects and the way of the proper management. Also it contributed to the publication of the name of the company and its business across the University and thus to get the first commercial contracts during the beginning of the Company.

The word of the Establishment
About the word of Rawand and their advice for students in higher education nearing completion of their graduation, Al Amiriyah says: The local market is constantly changing and is in need of various products and special services. This a big motivation for everyone and especially students of universities and colleges because they have the basics of entrepreneurship and have specialization and scope, to start their projects and exploit their hobbies to find a self source of income without the need for a job. This may not contribute to the development of the individual personally, and adds at the beginning being the most difficult and at every obstacle we may pass by phases of despair and frustration, but our ambition is often at the end of the journey, and the alignment of grapes in one cluster in our motto is evidence of our determination and our persistence together to achieve what we aspire in the future.
OCCI is working hard to promote the sector of small and medium enterprises in line with the high attention given by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said - may Allah protect him - to these institutions, as well as the Chamber is working hard to be convinced of the important vital role of these institutions.

In this context, the Chamber announced during a press conference the establishment of an Entrepreneurs’ Club in Muscat, done for implementation of the recommendations of the symposium for small and medium-sized enterprises held in Seih Al Shamikhat, which was organized in response to Royal orders of His Majesty, the Sultan - May Allah protect him.

The launching has been done during the press conference held by HE Said Bin Saleh Al Kiyumi, chairman of OCCI, in the presence of Khalifa bin Said Al Abri, CEO of the Public Authority for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises «Riyada» and Ahmed bin Abdul Karim Al Hooti, member of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of Chamber›s committee for the small medium enterprises.

OCCI has announced that registration for membership of the Entrepreneurs Club in Muscat, will be open for one-month period starting from Monday, February 22, 2016. His Excellency Chairman of the Chamber called upon all entrepreneurs in the Sultanate who meet the membership requirements, to hurry up with registration in the club which will represent their voice and will be a platform to be a network among themselves, to discuss on the challenges they face and to bring the same to the notice of the Chamber through a systematic and organized mechanism.

**Exchange of Experiences**

Khalifa bin Said Al Abri, Chief Executive Officer of the Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises said that to set up entrepreneurs’ club is one of the decisions of Seih Al Shamikhat symposium. The main objective of this club is to find a place for entrepreneurs to exchange their views and experiences, to discuss the concerns and problems that may be faced by entrepreneurs, to propose solutions by which they can overcome difficulties, and to meet with experts from the public and private sectors to discuss all that matters the entrepreneurs, serve their organizations and help to develop their institutions.

Mr. Ahmed bin Abdul Karim Al Hooti, OCCI board member and chairman of the SME committee at the Chamber, explained conditions for membership in the Entrepreneurs Club in Muscat, that any entrepreneur registered with OCCI, is entitled to register in the General Assembly as a member of the club. With respect to the membership of the Board of Directors, the
OCCI Chairman called upon all entrepreneurs to join the club as it represents their voice.

Vision of the Club
Entrepreneurs’ Club will work to bridge the communication gap between entrepreneurs and the relevant authorities. The vision of entrepreneurs’ club is to represent the associated real Omani entrepreneurs in front of the government and other authorities to communicate their views and suggestions with transparency, credibility and systematic methodology.

Objectives
As for the objectives of the club, it aims at upgrading with mechanisms of communication channels and their quality between the entrepreneurs, the Chamber and concerned authorities; to raise the level of active integrated partnership between entrepreneurs and concerned authorities to enable the establishment of a sustainable commercial institution that serve socially, politically and economically the national interest, and to enable the establishment of sectoral blocs to realize the principle of cooperation and integration for the success of small and medium enterprises as the basis to upgrade the development values and teamwork among entrepreneurs; to propose and implement events and activities concerned with the development and improvement of business entrepreneurs; and to contribute effectively in entrepreneurship culture awareness and activating the part of social and recreational cooperation between entrepreneurs. It is required for the membership of the club’s general assembly that the entrepreneur shall be of Omani nationality, have a small or medium enterprise, and to be an associate of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Board of Directors
The committee for establishing the entrepreneurs club agreed upon the mechanism to be followed in the selection of the club’s board of directors, which will consist of nine members chosen as follows: seven shall be of the registered members of the club. The Chamber shall invite members of the club to hold a general meeting and the entrepreneurs received the highest number of votes by secret ballot shall be elected as board members, who shall be full-time business persons and registered at the General Authority for the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (Riyada). The eighth member of the board shall be director of small and medium enterprises at the Chamber, and the ninth shall be representative of the General Authority for the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (Riyada).

The Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be elected during the first meeting of the Board of Directors, provided that they shall be among the seven entrepreneurs elected by secret ballot. The Council shall determine the functions of the club and the action plan; and the form the executive team as it deems appropriate for the approval of the Chamber’s Board of Directors.

Ahmed Al Hooti: Applicants for membership of the club must be full-time entrepreneurs.

Khalifa Al Abri: The club will serve the entrepreneurs and it is an opportunity to exchange the experiences.
Sultan Qaboos Industrial Excellence Award for 2015

Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel, and Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO) won the awards for the large companies’ category and Bin Salim Enterprises won the Award for the medium companies’ category.
Under the patronage of His Excellency Lt. Gen. Hassan bin Mohsen Al Shuraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, in the presence of a number of Ministers, High officials, venerable personalities and members of the industrial sector in the Sultanate. The industrial sector has scheduled to celebrate with the winners of the Sultan Qaboos Industrial Excellency Award 2015, as both the Jindal Iron and Steel Co. and Omani Indian Fertilizer Co. won the award for the category of large companies, while Bin Salim Enterprises won the award for the category of medium-sized companies.

On behalf of the ministry, HE Eng. Ahmed Al Dheeb, Undersecretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, said: The award has witnessed a radical change including assessment methodology, where it adopted the 9 main criteria set in accordance with the input of empowerment in industrial companies and based on the results achieved by the companies. The criteria include the standards and methods that should to be adopted and implemented by the managements of industrial companies, with respect to plans and strategies within the enterprise, like leadership, its development to the vision of the company, formation of strategies, personnel, and empowerment and development of their technical and professional skills; and process of assessing production methods followed in the company, in addition to human resource development, partnership process and the related ones like provision of company’s needs such as raw materials that involved in the operation of production; as well as safety and environment and social responsibility in addition to standards of marketing results and financial resources management.

H.E. added: Based on the nature of the new assessment model for the award, which calls for a comprehensive assessment of the various aspects, 38 evaluators from the private sector and agencies related to the industrial sector were trained for assessment, in addition to the experienced and educated jury from outside the ministry to represent the private sector, in order to ensure clarity, credibility and transparency in entire procedures of the award. Help of some international expertise in the field of Excellency awards is also sought. He said that the development of the award is a translation of the vision of the ministry to create a competitive business environment to contribute effectively to the development of the national economy. So the award has been restructured under the new framework and criteria for assessment that depend basically on the principles of total quality management system in accordance with the best internationally established practices, as this model includes an integrated system which has been applied to realize sustainable Excellency. He continued: since the first brightness of the dawn of the blessed Renaissance, the government is trying with all its effort to develop the industrial sector and to strengthen its position as an essential supporter for the national economy. Since 1991, the first year of the industry, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry organized His
Majesty’s Cup to the best five industries, being embodiment of what was announced by the beloved Leader of the country and Patron of its blessed renaissance of the two years (1991 and 1992) for the industry. Here we meet to celebrate with the industrial projects, that won for the first time after changing the name of the competition from its previous name by the blessing of His Majesty - May Allah protect him and care - into: «Sultan Qaboos Industrial Excellency Award», in order to honor those who have excelled and obtained the highest results, and to encourage other industrial companies to improve their performance at all levels.

24 Companies participated

He added: 24 industrial companies participated in competition of the award of this year, 20 of them were as large companies, and 4 as medium companies. Procedures of assessment of the companies participated in the competition took for about three months, during which forms and files of the participant companies were studied, through field visits to the companies.

Word of Private Sector

On behalf of the private sector HE Said Bin Saleh Al Kiyumi, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry delivered his speech in which he said: We are pleased at Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry by participation of our brothers at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and members of industrial sector in the ceremony, which is recurred every year to celebrate with the winners of the glorious industrialists who deserved honor of winning Cup of His Majesty, the Sultan, may Allah protect him.

Exceptional circumstances

He added that this session of the contest held in exceptional economic circumstances as the Sultanate and most countries in the world, particularly the oil-producing countries, face severe economic crisis due to the sharp drop in world oil prices that has affected evidently and clearly the development plans and programs, and the economic ones in particular. Hence, attention of the governments is projected mainly towards diversifying the sources of income and there was a need to activate the partnership with the private sector to accelerate the implementation of the plans in this aspect. In this context we see good signs by launching of an initiative to improve the business environment between the public and private sectors by sublime blessing of His Majesty the Sultan, may Allah protect him.

Challenges of the Sector

He continued: Industrial sector is emerging as one of the tributaries that can enhance their contributions in support of the national income resources, especially that the sector has achieved considerable growth in contributions to the gross domestic product over the past years, as well as large contributions to recruitment of national workforce, but to do so it requires, as we believe, greater attention by the government towards this sector through innovation in the laws and legislation, and improvements in incentives, and facilitation in the proceedings. Since it is important to overcome all the challenges faced by the industrial sector at the moment, we mention some of them, as a reminder of the importance of accelerating in finding appropriate solutions. They are but not limited to: Omanization, especially in the transport and distribution sector, and the involvement of the private sector in general and the industrial sector in particular in the formulation and elaboration of economic decisions before imposing it to apply them, in addition to activating the Omani product support mechanisms. We urge the government authorities concerned with the procurement for the same. Also we mention the the subject of customs exemptions, the importance of the approval of Omani standards in the Gulf cooperation Council and the development of government laboratories on industry and upgrading them by providing with modern equipment, and intensification of efforts towards addressing the phenomenon of dumping in our markets to ensure not harming domestic products.

Unfair competition

HE Chairman of the Chamber said: We can not miss to note that the national industries are facing unfair competition in the domestic market, where they experience narrowing -we hope it is not deliberately - from some of the big hypermarkets that do not allow them to showcase their products but with
unfair and discouraging conditions. The issue has been discussed with the owners of factories and hypermarkets alike, and we addressed the relevant authorities to find appropriate solutions. But we are yet to achieve the results that we look for. So we called and we are calling on the Omani industries to establish a joint marketing economic entity that provide opportunities for marketing national products with fair terms. Al Kiyumi added: We have raised demands from a lot of Omani industries to amend Article (60) of the Commercial Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 55/90, which states that (the shop can be treated by way of lease in whole or in part according to the provisions mentioned therein this chapter) .. Unfortunately, this article is exploited by some large hypermarkets to justify their unfair practices against national products. We also urge those industrial companies to think seriously about the focusing on the marketing of their products in foreign markets, and promoting the presence of the Omani products abroad, as it brings benefits to those companies and the overall economy. We invite them to participate in the exhibition of promoting Omani products (Omani Products Exhibition - OPEX), which will be held in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa from 11 to 14 April. There is no doubt about its importance to introduce high quality Omani products.

Thanks to the efforts

Al Kiyumi said: The Chamber is sparing no effort in coordination and cooperation with the government and the private industrial sector alike to find appropriate solutions to all the challenges being faced by the sector. The present stage requires to intensify the cooperation in this aspect. In this context, we extend vote of thanks and appreciation towards the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, led by His Excellency Dr. minister and operators of the industry sector, the Committee for the industry and promotion at the chamber, and the Committee of OPEX for their every joint efforts in favor of Omani industry development.

We particularly point out the significant role played by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates in providing the infrastructure and essential services in the industrial areas at competitive prices. We look forward to the establishment to expand in construction of industrial areas in the various governorates of the Sultanate to attract more local and foreign investments. Also we point out the multiple services provided by the export credit guarantee agency to support the Omani industries and products and we urge all to take advantage of it.

HE Said Bin Saleh Al Kiyumi emphasized on the option of the Sultanate to adopt a free economy policy, which requires non-intervention of state institutions directly in economic activities and to ensure the achievement of competitiveness. But regarding the intervention of some agencies without achieving the prescribed goals of this policy, we hope it will not continue further.
First Real Estate Forum at OCCI

REAL ESTATE UNDER SCANNER

Follow-up: Ibrahim Al Jandalani

Attendees:
Demanded Ministry of Housing to abolish the requirement for affiliation to the Real Estate Association to get the real estate broker card.
The First Real Estate Forum was aimed to contribute to the development performance of the real estate sector in the Sultanate and exchange views in all that related to this sector as an effort to bring it up in the next phase, as well as to overcome the obstacles faced by the sector in order to find effective and successful real estate sector.

This includes the development of governmental guidance in order to ensure the flow of the various investment opportunities in coordination with the concerned ministries, guiding the private sector to strongly engage in the development, by guiding the sector to announce public joint stock real estate companies to ensure benefit of the largest number of people and to encourage small investors to get involved in these companies, as well explaining benefits of their consolidation, offering facilities and exemptions and granting land to companies for the development of this sector, coordination with those concerned to provide a database accessible (by computer) and containing all the laws and regulations and statistics on the development of construction in the Sultanate, improvement and simplification of the regulations associated with this sector in the ministries and government bodies, electronically connecting them in order to encourage the investors to head for the sector, as well as providing large areas in public, offered to the companies investing in real estate, for the sake of their development and benefiting the most.

The forum was organized by real estate development committee of OCCI under the patronage of HE Said bin Saleh Al Kiyumi, Chairman, Board of Directors, OCCI.

Dr. Ibrahim bin Baqir al-Ajmi, chairman of the real estate development committee presented a working paper in which he discussed the role of the Chamber and of specialized committees in general and the role of the Committee of real estate development. At the beginning of the paper, Al Ajmi pointed to objectives of the Chamber, like regulating commercial and industrial interests of the private sector, participating in the formulation of economic policies and decisions, motivating the institutions and companies of the Omani private sector to participate in the overall development plans, representation of the Sultanate and the private sector of Oman in regional and global forums, discussion of private sector issues through specialized
committees in Muscat and branches, providing economic and legal studies and consulting, configuration of data on the private sector and its interests, conducting questionnaires and field surveys, organization of conferences, seminars, workshops and other objectives set for the private sector.

Dr. Ajmi also discussed in his paper on the obstacles to the real estate sector in the Sultanate, which have been summarized by the Committee’s meetings during the past period. Also he discussed the most important solutions proposed by the Committee for real estate development to overcome the obstacles faced by the sector in order to find effective and successful real estate sector, including the development of the government’s directives to ensure the flow of various investment opportunities, in coordination with the concerned ministries and other solutions.

Engineer Hassan bin Alawi bin Ahmed al-Ghazali, Director General of the National Infrastructure for Geographical Information at the National Center for Statistics and Information, presented another working paper titled ‘National infrastructure for geographical information, and promotion of the real estate sector’. He discussed in this paper on the vision, mission and objectives of the national infrastructure for geographical information. The vision is stated as providing all the sects of Omani society high-quality geographic information in addition to the integrated spatial services through a unified structure of geographic information within a framework of comprehensive and integrated policy and standards. Also he spoke in his paper on the importance of this structure in the promotion of the real estate sector by providing spatial data of real estate and related services and applications. Also he touched the future directions for supporting the real estate sector through reliable information to support decision-making, so as to provide the secure and comprehensive base of information to learn about the areas of attraction. It is working to identify and understand the needs and population structure, market analysis, analysis of targeted sects (customers) and to promote transparency and competitiveness. It is also working on the introduction of modern technology and the development of investment, by seeking to adopt modern technology in the field of real estate investment, management of smart projects, and smart permits for real estate projects.

Also he added the future directives of supporting the real estate sector, i.e., improvement of performance to the highest levels of corporate excellence through the development and maintenance of government assets, and increasing user satisfaction and efforts to meet the requirements.

Then the door of debate was opened, where they addressed the decision of the Ministry of Housing to compel offices and brokers of real estate to be registered to the Association of Real Estate, as a condition to get a real estate broker card. They demanded rescinding of the decision and the sufficiency of registration with OCCI, for a card.

The Forum came out with some recommendations, including, support for the committee for real estate development to establish the training course, ‘real estate broker’ in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, and the possibility of establishing an Omani real estate exhibition, in which all institutions working in the field of real estate in the Sultanate will be participating, and for establishment of these sort of forums regularly, once every two years.
Tourism Committee calls for one-stop service centre for Tourism Sector Investors

Ali bin Salem Al Hajri, Chairman of the Tourism Committee of the Chamber, said that unfortunately there are governorates forgotten by tourism packages and programs offered by the tourism offices despite they have important tourist attraction sites, due to lack of familiarity of the expatriates who are in charge of the tourism offices and their dependence on molded programs without any effort to update or improve. He added: Tourism offices have to take into account the importance of maximizing the benefit of all parties when they work on tourism programs and packages through the development of these packages in order to achieve satisfaction of tourists and benefits of tourist estates along with the benefits of offices.

This came during the first meeting of the Tourism Committee of the Chamber, in the current year, which discussed several important topics regarding the tourism sector in the Sultanate and the importance of exploiting the tourist season and its extension. Also the Committee discussed the matter of prices of tourist lodges and hotels, majority of which are not fit for local tourists, and do not serve the tourist families of the Sultanate, asking, in this context, to go with prices that commensurate with the possibilities of internal and external tourists.

With respect to the multiple procedures and the difficulty in obtaining licenses for investors in the tourism sector, the Committee appealed to the Ministry of Tourism and other relevant agencies to the need to accelerate the work of the one-stop service centre for investors in this sector. The committee requested to clearly mention the requirements of these agencies, collectively in a consolidated form to simplify the process for the investors and service for the tourism sector, from which a lot is expected.

During the meeting, the Committee has been divided into two taskforces, first one is meant for sector of tours and travel offices, and tourism packages, while the second team is responsible for tourist guides. This division aimed for smooth follow-ups of implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee, according to terms of reference for each team.
Two options before Government Employees
Ministry of Civil Services announced through Circular No. 2/2016 concerning regulations related to permission for government employees to devote full-time to establish and manage their own businesses further to the approval of the Cabinet. There are two alternatives: first one is to submit a resignation letter and retire for the establishment and management of their organization, and the second alternative is to submit request for leave without pay for full-time dedication to establish and manage own institutions.

This was based on the decisions of Sih Al Shamikhat seminar conducted in January 2013 regarding allowing staff of government agencies who wish to establish and manage their own businesses to dedicate full-time for the same, along with their salaries continued to be paid for a year according to specific regulations to be adopted during the year 2013. At a seminar for assessing the implementation of the decisions of Sih Al Shamikhat at Sultan Qaboos University in January 2015 it was decided to allow employees of government agencies for leave without pay for a period not exceeding four years for a full-time dedication for the management of their institutions under regulations prepared by the Ministry of Civil Services in coordination with the Public Authority for the Development of Small and Medium enterprises “Riyada” and Rafd Fund.

The conditions and procedures for the first alternative, i.e., to submit a resignation letter and devote themselves to the establishment and management of organization:

1. To submit resignation letter three months before the date required by the employee to resign substantiated by the documents that prove the consent of concerned authorities for the establishment and management of own enterprise and its ownership to the employee. The date of resignation for the employees with teaching positions or related technical jobs in colleges, institutes and schools - whatever the government agencies affiliated to - shall be from the beginning of the academic year next to the year in which the application was submitted.

2. Employee should be in active service at least three years and not more than 15 years.

3. Age of employee should not exceed 45 years.

4. Decision on acceptance or rejection of the resignation letter should be by head of the unit - nobody else -- within 30 days from the date of submission and otherwise it shall be considered as accepted by law. In the event of a refusal, it should be substantiated with reason.

5. Resigned employee will be eligible for monthly amount, equivalent to his gross salary, from the public treasury for one year from the date of end of service.

6. The employee resigned from his service in accordance with the foregoing provisions is not eligible to apply for his job in any of the units of the administrative body of the country before three years from date of the resignation as per legal procedures prescribed for the appointment.

7. No breach is allowed for these conditions for the discretionary authority granted to the head of the unit to accept or reject the resignation, and without prejudice to the incumbent obligations, employees have to serve in where they work for a limited period and according to the law regarding dispatches, grants and subsidies, scholarships or other laws.
The procedures and conditions for applying for the second alternative, i.e., application for special leave without pay for full-time dedication to establish own organization are: to submit application for leave three months before the start of the employee’s leave, substantiated with the documents that prove the consent of the competent authorities on the establishment and management of enterprise and private ownership of the employee, provided that the date of commencement of such leave for the employees in teaching or associated technical jobs in colleges, institutes and schools – to whatever government agency affiliated – shall be from the beginning of the academic year next to the year in which the application was submitted; employee should be in the actual service for a period not less than one full Gregorian calendar year taking into account of the routine holidays, and sick leaves within this period; decision on acceptance or rejection of the application for leave must be within 30 days from the date of submission and otherwise it shall be considered accepted by law and in the event of a refusal, reason should be shown; this leave shall be granted by decision of the head of the unit – nobody else – for only once during the employee’s service duration and for extended period, not less than one year, renewable at the application of the employee at least three months before the end of the leave period not exceeding four years; service of the employee is considered as ended unless he returned to work by applying at least three months before the end of the leave or apply for renewal during the same period without exceeding the upper limit of the four-year period. Government departments shall pay the government’s share and the share of employee contributions to the pension fund in accordance with the provisions of the pension regulations subject to deduction from the approved allocations for the employee in the unit’s budget during the period of the leave and this obligation may be suspended when the leave is renewed based on the reasons assessed by the Public Authority for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises. “Riyada” according to the circumstances of each individual case; and the employee is not allowed to work in employment on assignment during the leave period.

The number of beneficiaries of the first decision on allowing the staff of government agencies who wish to establish and manage their own businesses and dedicate their full-time while continuing their salaries for one year has reached 15 employees.
With the participation of 50 men and women, the training course at OICC branch at Al Buraimi Governorate had been ended. It was organized by the Buraimi Branch in cooperation with Al Buraimi Management Training Institute. It was in the field of financial accounting and it lasted for three days at the headquarters of the branch.

This is a part of a series of training courses and programs organized by the Chamber’s branch in Al Buraimi governorate during the current year in collaboration with a number of training institutions and centres available in the Sultanate to support the development of the private sector institutions.

The course has dealt with a number of key themes on the subject of financial accounting, including basic accounting concepts, elements of the accounting system, models and components of financial statements and reports, analyzing financial operations, according to the theory of double entry, and phases and steps of the accounting courses.

The course aimed at strengthening accounting awareness among the participants and introducing its importance in different business enterprises system in addition to the identification of basic accounting principles and methods, enabling them to earn basic skills in accounting job and develop their abilities and improving it so as to contribute in supporting accounting and financial system in their organizations, departments, financial divisions.

Ahmed bin Suleiman Al Azzani, Acting director of the Chamber’s branch in Al Buraimi Governorate and Fauzia Al Sabahiya, Director of Al Buraimi Management Training Institute issued certificates to the participants.
Head of the Union of Arab Women Investors:

Economy is that steers the policy, not vice versa

Our office in the Sultanate is in the process of establishment, and Khadija Al Battashiya is the General Coordinator at the Office.

Dr. Huda Jalal, president of the Union of Arab Women Investors, said that she always believes that the economy is steering the policy and not vice versa as the permanence of relations has always been driven by common interests.
This came during her visit to the Sultanate to participate in the opening of the Forum and Exhibition of Arab industries, as the Union plans to conduct economic forums and activities in the Arab countries and enter the Union as a sponsor of the forum. In this context, the guest expressed her happiness with the investment climate prevailing in the Sultanate and she said that the Sultanate is a safe haven for investments being sequel to its political stability.

Office of the Union in the Sultanate
About the opening of an office of the General Union of Arab Women investors in the Sultanate, Dr. Huda Yassin explained that the union office in the Sultanate is under process. Khadija Al Battashiya, owner of East Coast of Organizing Exhibitions LLC, has been chosen as the general coordinator of the office as she expressed her willingness for the same and as per her cooperation during the Conference of Arab Women Investors at League of Arab States.

Need of Support and Justice
About the business community and the presence of women in the Sultanate as entrepreneurs, she says: It is clear that the women in Oman have great willingness to do business and contribute to the economy, but they are still in need of support, training and honing their skills in this area. She adds: I think they need more justice from the part of media, and heeding their ideas since the woman became possessing economic and investment ideas which cannot be neglected and even they have surpassed men in several areas.

Arab Women Investors Union
President of the Arab Women Investors Union pointed out that the Union as an NGO was established by Arab Economic Ministers Resolution No. 1272 at the Arab League in order to be of Arab women investors their own organization as an active economic entity in the Arab Economic System. It includes a selection of competencies and experiences of women in order to strengthen the role of women in the field of investment.
We highlight in this corner of the Atana Musandam hotels, one of the most important tourist resorts in Musandam Governorate, which embodies the spirit of Omani hospitality. The following dialogue with Mr. Khaled Alwan, General Manager of Atana hotels in the Musandam Governorate highlights on Atana Hotels and its vision in the field of tourism, and the most important ways and mechanisms to support the tourism sector and the promotion of tourism in Musandam Governorate.

Atana Hotel is located in the northern tip of the Musandam peninsula, near the border with the United Arab Emirates, which is also close to Khasab Airport, where it takes only 10 minutes by car to reach the hotel. This represents the first brand of traditional hospitality which focuses on the good traditional Omani hospitality with international standards. The hotel strives to embody Omani heritage inherited in Omani traditions. The Atana resort consists of 60 deluxe rooms, fantastic restaurants, a swimming pool and halls equipped for meeting.

Gateway
The hotel is the gateway for families and adventure seekers to the aesthetics of Musandam peninsula, as it works to help the guests from the first moment of their arrival to explore the hidden treasures of Oman and introduce them to the local culture with all its natural and cultural beauty. Atana hotel gives guests the opportunity to enjoy the very best of nature in this unique region of the world. Also, as a part of its role in introducing Omani heritage it provides the opportunity to enjoy the Omani arts, delicious food and charming natural beauty of Musandam.

The nature of the unique and diverse activities
On the design of the hotel and its corners, and the activities offered, Khaled Alwan says: The hotel was built in the shadow of the old Musandam Khasab Castle. In designs of buildings, heritage inspired by the ancient Omani architecture designs are considered. It is an ideal platform to explore all that the Musandam peninsula offers -- unique nature attractive sceneries, and various activities, such as swimming with dolphins, diving in the blue water etc.

Pure Omani experience
Mr. Khaled Alwan says about the experience provided by Atana to its visitors: The resort offers tourists and travelers pure Omani experience combining aspects of Oman’s rich heritage and extraordinary elements of tourism in the island of Musandam. The juxtaposition of the sea and the mountains is among the most exclusive features of this governorate. It provides outing in traditional boats for visitors to have fun and a memorable experience as well as visiting many of the archaeological sites that abound in the governorate.
The expectations of growth in tourism
As for the expectations of resort management for 2016, he says: We expect a positive increase in reservation for stay during this year as Musandam is gaining more recognition from local, regional and international partners, who have shown great interest to visit and promote the governorate as long as there is a unique resort for all lovers of the sea and the mountain, adventure seekers and enthusiasts of culture and tradition.

Enriching Proposals
The following are among the proposals of the resort management which may contribute in supplying largest numbers of tourists to the resort and Musandam:

• Construction of a craft market for exhibition and sale of handmade craft products and locally made commemorative gifts in order to introduce them and spread the identity of the governorate
• Increasing number of daily flights to Musandam governorate and attracting tourist ferries.
• Taking into account projecting Musandam in the media and in marketing as an important marketing destination for entertainment and adventure with what attract lovers of adventure regionally and internationally.
• Simplifying the visa process and enabling the submission of the application and approval online, which speeds up the entry and exit across the borders.
Sheikh Ibrahim bin Said al-Nabhani, Chairman of OCCI Al Dakhiliya Branch, stressed the keenness of the Chamber’s branch on the promotion of small and medium enterprises to invest in all sectors, including investment in apiculture and propagation of honey bees, and increasing the added value to contribute effectively to the overall development efforts, and achieve self-sufficiency of local honey harvesting, being one of the natural resources upon which the Omani people depend since ancient times. He spoke about the geographical diversity and the appropriate environment available at home in the honey industry, which has had an active role in this area.

This was during seminar on Omani Honeybees organized by OCCI Al Dakhiliya Branch at its headquarters in Nizwa. Its inauguration was chaired by HE Dr. Ahmed bin Nasser al-Bakri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, in the presence of His Excellency Dr. Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad al-Saadi, governor of Al Dhakhiliya and a number of Excellencies, the lecturers and beekeepers.

**A partnership between researchers and beekeepers**

Nabhani said: The event is in continuation of the approach outlined by the Chamber by the Committee for Food Security, by which it aims provision and the development of various knowledge branches necessary for the success of the business of small and medium enterprises related to food. The seminar on the Omani honey is conducted to the advancement of knowledge of beekeepers and those interested in this sector and to provide several scientific researches that highlight some topics of interest to this sector, as well as building a partnership between the beekeepers and researchers from various relevant authorities to bring in the future, scientific solutions to some of the problems faced by beekeepers. Here the branch of OCCI Al Dakhiliya governorate strives as an institution involved in the Omani private sector in the governorate to follow business developments in this area and to encourage businessmen and businesswomen to invest in it. We hope this sector has economic supplements and it is a good step towards the realization of economic diversification in the Sultanate.

3270 beehives were distributed during the period 2011 to 2015

Eng Khaseeb Bin Salim Al Maani, Director of Guidance and Plant production at Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, explained role of the Ministry in the development and propagation of honey bees in the Sultanate, and pointed out that the range of honey bees are living in a single dwelling place – a cooperative social living. The most important benefits of bees on agricultural crops is the cross pollination of trees and shrubs and flowering agricultural crops which increase the fertilization to more than 30% and thus increase production per unit area. Also Omani honey bees acquired wide fame and they have been developed and expanded in the Sultanate. He pointed to the services that have been implemented for the development of bee sector at the governorate’s level, during the period from 2011-2015. A total of 3270 beehives have been distributed during this period and 785 beekeepers from all the governorates have got its benefits. Around 697 electrical honey extractors and honey ripeners have been distributed. He also spoke about the project to develop breeding and propagation of Omani honey bees with funding from the Agricultural and Fisheries Development Fund.

**Omani Honey is distinguished by high quality characteristics**

Dr. Aliya bint Mohammed Sajwani, supervisor of biology at the Ministry of Education presented a working paper on compliance of Omani honey specifications to the
international standards, noting that the Omani honey is distinguished by high-quality characteristics that are consistent with international standards, and this is what earned it a good reputation in international parties. Also the Omani beekeeper has high experience in the field of beekeeping. In order to preserve this grace that God has given us, more researches have to be conducted in this area and their application in the field, to earn traders more experience, and thus reflect positively on the increase of honey production. Omani consumer needs more products in the domestic market, emphasizing the importance of amending some of the international standards relating to the characteristics of honey to suit the hot weather. She also talked about the pollen in determining the type of honey. The pollen has a great role in understanding the identity of a honey. It tells us story of bee’s visits to different flowers.

**Exhibition is a good way to market the honey**

Saeed bin Mohammed bin Habib Al Kindi, a participant in a honey exhibition, said: Organizing of such exhibitions is one of the important active aspects to highlight the products of beehives in the Sultanate. We hope it is to be conducted on an annual basis, in order to exhibit honey products of beekeepers, mobilize Omani honey market and introduce to the consumer the types of honey. This gives an incentive for beekeepers where they find good ways to promote and highlight the finest products of honey, adding that finding the right market to promote our products directly affects the continuous interest in this profession. He wished the continuation of such exhibitions because of its valuable benefits for beekeepers in the Sultanate.

He said our goal of our participation in the exhibition was to exhibit the honey that I got from apiaries, to introduce the quality of honey to the consumer, to join with beekeepers in the market and get to know them, and to find appropriate ways of marketing during these meetings.

I had many benefits like exhibiting my honey products as well as wooden accessories that I manufacture myself in my own workshop like beehives, wooden crates, wooden frames, foundation wax and wooden feeders. Also the acquaintance with manufacturing companies helps to identify their location in the market and to find apiarists for commercial production, which opens ways of marketing.

Mohammed bin Ali bin Mansour Al Khuzairi, owner of Sur Overseas, said: Our participation in the exhibition was by the invitation of the OCCI, Nizwa Branch and the Ministry of Agriculture. We have introduced materials related to beekeeping, products of Liga an Italian company and also we exhibited Varroa treatments from France, Italy and China. Our goal was to help introducing to beekeepers the best and finest products pertaining to beekeeping and treatment to Varroa disease, and also to market our products in all regions of the Sultanate.

We have benefited from this exhibition a lot, and also we benefited a lot from the lectures. Also we came in touch with some beekeepers, where we were able to market them our products very smoothly and easily. Many thanks to the efforts exerted by the Chamber and we hope further progress and development for Sultanate Oman.
In an interview previously published in the magazine “Al Khazinah”, Engineer Saleh Bin Mohammed Al Shanfari, Chairman of the Committee of the Chamber for Food Security, and CEO of Oman Food Investment Holding Co., a company fully-owned by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, spoke about Oman’s food security concerns. The aim of the company, established in 2012, was to strengthen the food security of the Sultanate of Oman by investing in food projects locally and abroad in partnership with local investment funds and investment companies from inside and outside the Sultanate, who are interested in food sector.

Shanfari is talking here about the reality of food security in the Sultanate, and the role of the private sector in this regard, and what true food security is if there was a food security and other topics.

Towards absolute Food Security

Saleh Al Shanfari:

• There is no absence at all with respect to the initiatives of investment in the food security sector.
• Food companies enjoy a high market value and enjoy a strong financial solvency.
• Sultanate is self-sufficient in fish and exports considerable amount of fish products.

Is it possible to reach the levels of “absolute food security” or even close to it in the absence of government/private investments in food projects and in very important sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and livestock?

There is no absence at all with respect to the initiatives of investment in this sector as the past years have witnessed the launch of several food projects in the Sultanate and wide participation of companies, institutions and investment funds as it exceeded the investment value of the announced projects in the past few months, more than half a billion dollars. This investment confirms the confidence of investors in this sector and in the ability of the Sultanate to ensure the success of such projects compared to the successful experiences in the areas of white meat, feeds, flour mills and related industries. Not to mention the huge demand for Omani products that enjoy high reputation and unbeatable quality and the demand is increasing in all the GCC countries. I assure my dear reader that Omani Food Investment Holding company is an investment arm of the Government in the field of food investments. It has a clear strategy to take advantage of opportunities, and collaborate with various government funds and other local investment companies and organizations specialized in food production in order to maximize opportunities mentioned above. These initiatives are in turn enhance food security through carefully studied investment tools, which are clearly dependent on market instruments and mechanisms from supply, demand, assessment of consumer satisfaction, providing the best kinds of manufactured goods locally, replacing imports, achieving great deal of trade balance and contributing to the local economic output.

Is our achievement of the comparative level of food security acceptable, especially if we knew that we were in some stage very close to achieving absolute food security?

It is necessary to correct the concept of food security and short definition and its explanation, as the concept of food security is determined by the ability of the state to provide adequate and appropriate quantity, and at a reasonable price, to all who live on its land all the time with smoothness and ease.

On this basis we can say without equivocation or hesitation that the Sultanate lives in food safety, as the food security...
concept goes beyond the concept of self-sufficiency, about which I will talk later, to a more comprehensive concept involving important factors such as storage, transport, distribution and quality of food. Here it must be pointed out that the Sultanate enjoys the presence of the best and most successful systems related to inventory reserves of basic commodities, where the Sultanate has not experienced any shortage of food, both in normal conditions or during the climatic adversity happened in the Sultanate in the past decade or so.

The concept of self-sufficiency is either to be self-sufficient in full of a certain commodity, or a long list of goods, or most of the goods. In my knowledge, there is no specific country which have no import of all food commodities, but rare ones. China, for example, is a country that produces several commodities, but still imports high-quality basket of food commodities from abroad, while it exports many types of manufactured goods and non-manufactured items. The Sultanate is self-sufficient in fish and exports a high quantity of fish products, as well as many types of dates, vegetables and seasonal fruits. The Sultanate produces about 20 per cent of its red meat and this indicates the decline in self-sufficiency ratio of red meat commodity.

So the concept of absolute self sufficiency is rare and here the concept of relative self-sufficiency highlights. This opens the doors wide to the investor in this sector to fill this huge gap, so as to turn this challenge into an investment opportunity and this is what should be done. Already there is initiative to set up a major project in the field of red meat in Sultanate to fill part of this gap. This way we will witness the launch of quality initiatives in the field of food investments and they will have significant impact in transforming the Sultanate into a global destination and regional center for storage, production and manufacture of various types of food items that will reach into the hundreds of millions of people in the geographical area surrounding the Sultanate.

Tools
Food investment requires a set of tools and procedures that bring you success, whether the existence of a clear investment vision or provide a certain climate that assist to instill the concepts and culture of investment. This applies to all countries, including countries that are highly dependent on the contribution of food production in clear economic output.

Food Security Committee
About the role that OCCI plays in this aspect, represented by Food Security Committee, he says: Food Security Committee of OCCI, since it is formed, contributed through its members and supporters to the role of the Chamber in instilling the concept of food security in terms of investment and business aspects and in overcoming the obstacles faced by some entrepreneurs in this regard. Also the committee is trustfully liaising with agricultural associations, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and The Research Council. The committee enjoys diversity of experiences of businessmen and businesswomen related to the sector of plant, animal and fish. It is a close consultation platform for the sector and lucky with permanent support of the Board of Directors of the Chamber. And the members of the Committee continuously contributed and participated in several food events or workshops, conferences and delegations of foreign investors, as well as it is working consistently with other Chamber activities in some of the events and activities that take place in coordination with relevant agencies. The existence of this committee among various specialized Chamber committees ensures the perception and awareness of the Chamber leadership regarding the importance of this vital sector, which is linked to various productive segments of large corporations, small-scale producers, small and medium institutions and entrepreneurs of agricultural and fisheries business.

In general, the existence of specialized committees in OCCI expresses the importance of the sectors represented by those committees and that ensuing mostly of specialized teams to address urgent issues that need to fathom the issues or problems that might be raised from time to time.

Is our achievement of the comparative level of food security acceptable, especially if we knew that we were in some stage very close to achieving absolute food security?
It can be declared with a high degree of confidence that the Sultanate is moving with confident steps towards the establishment of a sustainable and natural food projects, inspired by the successful experiences, and based on the best international business practices, bringing the best available techniques. Also the Omani youth shall be rehabilitated to do the management of these projects by attracting them and giving them continuous training both in technical and administrative aspects, or in leadership skills. This will, by grace of Allah the Almighty, lead to continue this business for generations to come that we should establish for them viable projects which can expanded and diversified.

Regarding the clear plans to guarantee achieving food security for the next generations, he says:
We can feel a high degree of satisfaction because of the great development witnessed in this vital sector, and in particular we noticed over the attention and care by the relevant governmental bodies and the enthusiasm of Omani businessmen and their friends from many countries who are consciously entering to invest in food production, packaging and marketing, believing in the extent of this sector’s ability to resist economic fluctuations and stability in the event of any disruptions in oil prices, as this sector remains a strong one with sustainability and attractiveness.

Tell us about the role assigned to the private sector to achieve food security of both types absolute and relative?
If we reflect on the performance of food companies, whether those listed or unlisted in the stock market, we find them enjoy high market value and financial solvency having a strong ability to simply attract local funding. Local banks strive to win contracts to fund for these companies believing in their ability to meet their obligations in the long term.

He concludes his interview by saying: We must all strive at all levels to make more efforts to improve the investment environment and enhance the competitiveness of this sector and other sectors and work on the continuous review of related proceedings, and to make more efforts to achieve more attraction for local investments by domestic and foreign investors through continuous coordination between private and public sector, paying constant consultation of paramount importance to get to the best practices that help local and foreign investors to enter into such investments comfortably and repeat investment initiatives in the promising food sector.
Uzbek delegation discusses cooperation with the Chamber

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, represented by Engineer Redha bin Juma Al Saleh, Vice Chairman of the Chamber for Administrative and Financial Affairs, received a trade delegation from the Republic of Uzbekistan, at the headquarters of the Chamber in Ruwi.

The engineer explained during the meeting that the relations between the Sultanate and Uzbekistan on the commercial level are still trivial, and it is important to work on its strengthening and raising its levels through intensifying mutual visits, which will contribute to the introduction of the investment opportunities, inducements and investment advantages, to the business community from the two countries.

The meeting also broached the experience of the Republic of Uzbekistan in caring small and medium enterprises, which currently contributes 58% of GDP. The Uzbek government plans to raise this ratio during the coming fifteen years to 85% through a number of mechanisms including privatization and attracting foreign investment.

As there was talk about the Omani Uzbek company, Uzbek-Oman Investment Company LLC (Uzomankapital LLC) at Tashkent, in which the Sultanate’s government owns the proportion 75% by its State General Reserve Fund, while the Uzbek government owns 25% from the Uzbek Investment Fund. Its office there has the task to introduce the opportunities and possibilities of investment with both sides, conduct study about them, present suggestions and pass it into the partners for the economic feasibility study to look into the possibility of investing.

Delegation led by the Chamber visited Modeko furniture and decoration exhibition in Izmir-Turkey

Delegation of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry participated in the opening of Modeko furniture and decoration exhibition in Izmir, Turkey. Izmir municipality chairman and senior Turkish officials opened the exhibition, which is the most comprehensive of this type in Turkey, with participation from many countries, who were present to see new models of Turkish furniture. Head of Omani delegation was Mr. Ahmed bin Abdul Kareem Al Hooti, member of board of directors. He presented Shield of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry to the chairman of Izmir municipality and to the chairman of Izmir Chamber of Commerce, on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition.

The Omani delegation of entrepreneurs has received the attention of officials and businessmen who helped to increase the volume of trade exchange with the Sultanate and to simplify procedures for shipment and customs to transport various Turkish goods and commodities to markets of the Sultanate. Following Izmir, the Omani delegation visited many historical monuments, factories and major establishments.
Committee for Mining and Quarries at OCCI, at its first meeting this year, chaired by Sheikh Buti Bin Mohammed Al Neyadi, member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber and Chairman of the Chamber’s branch in Al Buraimi Governorate, in the presence of members of the Committee, discussed a set of points related to the mining and quarries sector in the Sultanate including the reality of the mining sector, and obstacles faced by the sector, along with the challenges facing the sector in the light of the economic crisis.

The meeting dealt with the new laws that frame the work of the quarries and minerals, including taxes levied on mining companies. Also discussed on the intention of the members of the Committee to visit to the Public Authority for Mining to meet Chairman of the Authority and discuss with respect to this promising sector and explain the challenges faced by the workers in this sector.

Also Committee members demanded both the Shura Council and institutions related to the laws and regulations the need for participation of private sector and consider their visions in drafting these laws. Members also demanded to exempt the Omani investors and owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) who are wishing to invest in this sector, from value-added taxes for five years.

The Committee called for new surveys to estimate the wealth existing under the ground, and not to rely on old surveys. Also the committee deems the importance of communication with the Authority for Duqm Special Economic Zone about the possibility of finding investment opportunities in mining and quarries in the region and the features and facilities for the investor in Oman.

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) represented by Engineer Redha bin Juma Al Saleh, Vice Chairman for Administrative and Financial Affairs, received HE Amina Mohamed, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Kenya and the delegates accompanying her, who were in an official visit to the Sultanate. The meeting discussed ways of enhancing joint cooperation between the two friendly countries in all that would develop economic, trade and investment relations.

Engineer Redha Al Saleh pointed out that the Chamber is working hard to open up new horizons and markets for Omani investors and producers seeking to expand their business, as the opening to the African markets is the goal and the effort of all. The Omani-Kenyan relations are ancient and deep-rooted, especially regarding part of economy and investment, and in a lot of areas there could be partnerships between the Omani private sector and Kenya, including agriculture, tourism and other fields.

The meeting also discussed the challenges faced by the Omani investors in Kenya and the ways to overcome them and the most important facilities and procedures desired by investors there, as His Excellency the Minister showed her willingness to work with the Chambers of Commerce and coordinate between them and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry in order to serve the interests of the economy and the private sector in general in both countries.
Engineer Redha bin Juma Al Saleh, Vice Chairman of OCCI for Administrative and Financial Affairs, received a delegation from the Council of the Republic of Belarus to discuss on ways to enhance trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

He welcomed the delegation thanking them for their desire to promote trade cooperation between the two countries, pointing out that the trade and economic relations between the Sultanate and the Republic of Belarus is weak and needs to be strengthened creating joint ventures and investments between the two sides, adding that such meetings offer investment opportunities in the two countries and make it easier for entrepreneurs to find a good way to invest.

Al Saleh also pointed to the possibility of strengthening these relations through economic memoranda of understanding between the chambers of commerce and the exchange of delegations of businessmen to get to know the closely available opportunities and how to take advantage of the same, as well as participation in exhibitions held by the two countries, which in turn works to create trade and investment partnerships among the private sector in the two countries.

The Belarusian team praised the warm reception and the firm desire by the Chamber to open a new portal for Omani businessmen in Belarus and to open the door for their counterparts of the Belarusian businessmen in the Sultanate, stressing that economic and trade relations between the countries are the basis for the promotion and development of cooperation in other areas.

The Belarus team opined that in order to gain access to further cooperation between the two countries, there must be plans to create projects that serve the two countries in the outset and the private sector, explaining further that Belarus has many skills and many of the large projects, which aim to have a place in the Sultanate, such as auto plants and the possibility of establishing a Belarusian plant for car assembly in the Sultanate.
Business Delegations and Economic benefits

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Business and economic delegations between countries represents an important link for direct communication between the business and economic sectors and to get acquainted naturally of the available opportunities, by offering the international investors the available opportunities. I do not know why somebody raised controversy on the increased number of such visits, including the Iranian delegation and the extent of its efficacy. If they were not useful, they were not harmful, especially in light of the difficult economic conditions experienced by the oil-exporting countries, that rely on it as their sole source of income. It makes it essential to actively search for alternative sources to diversify sources of income, through joint investments in new projects that provide true job opportunities for the hordes of job seekers who proliferate year after year. Perhaps the Iranian economy may enjoy the unusual possibilities by the lifting of the international embargo, and the release of some of their capitals stuck in foreign banks. Therefore, it is useful to open up economic and trade relations between the two countries in support of the Omani economy, taking advantage of the neighboring geographical location to increase intra-regional trade, and strong political and historical relations between the two parties, which help to stabilize the region.

So I do not see any justification for the reluctance of many entrepreneurs to participate and take advantage of such visits that may result in establishing joint investment companies by businessmen from the two countries, in addition to cooperation in logistics projects and railway project and the sectors of tourism, fisheries, health and food, as the Iranians have experience, knowledge and implementation, and the Sultanate have possibilities that contribute to increase the volume of trade to the largest numbers; because the size of the current trade exchange between the two countries is only about 337 million Rials ($ 877 million).

This makes it necessary to lead joint investments, to the production of competitive goods at the regional and international levels, with the implementation of many of the deals between businessmen from the two countries, which will double with the registration of Iranian investments in Duqm area at high rates, to the formation of terms for joint investment cooperation in future viable projects, and to introduce major Iranian companies and areas of business, as the number of Iranian companies registered in Oman, that exercise commercial activities is 259. So we can raise the size of trade exchange to more than four billion Rials (about US $ 10 billion) in a short time. Especially if it is to benefit from the shipping line which was launched between the two countries in May this year, because it contributes to maximize economic returns of two countries, and benefit from it in the promotion of Omani goods in Iran and to the neighboring markets. On the other hand, this line represents an asylum and a promising gate to re-export of Iranian products to many Gulf, Asian and the Middle African countries through the Omani territory, particularly as Iran becomes a large regional market which is yet to be exploited. Other Gulf states may also benefit from this especially in light of the high volume of trade in the last two years of about $ 200 million to more than one billion, according to Iran’s ambassador to the Sultanate. So we have to work hard in order to strengthen these relations to serve the mutual interests and take advantage of opportunities to promote bilateral relations through role of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Tehran in organizing exchanging exhibitions of products and marketing, and in exchange of trade delegations.
OMANI-IRANI PRODUCTS’ EXHIBITION AT MUSANDAM

OCCI is seeking to improve and smoothen avenues and roads and to build strong economic relations with various brotherly and friendly countries, so as to open new markets and horizons for the investor and the Omani products. It works to facilitate its reach in various countries having emerging markets. This is what we saw from the Chamber’s branch in Musandam Governorate in the exhibition of Omani-Iranian products held under the patronage of HE Khalifa bin Al Mardas Al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam, in collaboration with office of His Excellency the Governor of Musandam, and in cooperation, coordination and participation of all government and private agencies in Musandam Governorate.

This exhibition has received great attention of the Omani and Iranian sides. The opening session was attended by HE Saeed Bin Saleh Al Kiyumi, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, HE Jassim Jidari, governor of Hormozgan in Islamic Republic of Iran and a large gathering of Omani businessmen and their Iranians counterparts.

The exhibition aimed at the promotion of investment in Musandam governorate, and the encouragement of small and medium enterprises to highlight the initiatives and creativity, to embrace the thought of inventors and innovators from students, community members in general and the businessmen and businesswomen in small and medium enterprises and employees in public and private sectors, to shed the light on the cultural and historical heritage of Sultanate in general and its introduction, to bring out the traditional authentic crafts in Musandam Governorate, to create work environment, to provide investment opportunities for businessmen and businesswomen in the Sultanate in general and in the Musandam Governorate in particular and the Islamic Republic of Iran, to promote the spirit of partnership, cooperation and bilateral relations between the two countries in the economic field, to mutually discuss on opportunities for cooperation in the economic field between the two countries and its strengthening, to introduce Omani and Iranian products to the visitors to the exhibition and the institutions and companies from the two countries, and to arrange meetings for officials in the economic sector from the two countries.

Hamid Man bin Kamil Al Raisi, Chamber branch chairman has valued during the opening ceremony of the exhibition the participation of the Iranian side, wishing them a pleasant stay in their second country, the Sultanate of Oman and throughout Musandam.

He added: Out of the fraternal and historical relations and ways of cooperation that bind the Sultanate of Oman with friendly Islamic Republic of Iran, and strengthen the bonds of cooperation and economic exchange between the two countries, by the grace of Allah Almighty, Omani-Iranian exhibition has been organized in cooperation and coordination with the concerned authorities in province of Hormozgan of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which carries great ambitions to promote business investment, to consolidate the ties of economic cooperation, to open new and broad horizons for joint economic work in the most promising sectors in Musandam and the province of Hormozgan, to develop and facilitate the mechanisms of mutual business between the two sides in an effort at economic diversification to create a business environment that contributes to supplement the national economy and the development of the service industry.

He referred to the global economic crisis triggered by the decline of oil prices as oil represents the central pillar in supporting the GDP of these countries. Here it was the duty of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Musandam Governorate to seek to open new horizons and create diversified economic environment for private sector. Economic diversification stands as the most important solutions, on which must be our focus. That will have a tangible impact to contribute to advancing the comprehensive development process towards the further
development and growth. So this international economic demonstration that unite us in a good chance with our brothers in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which will last for three days, includes display of the investment opportunities, local products and cultural heritage and also includes bilateral meetings between businessmen from both sides to discuss investment and cooperation opportunities for the development and promotion of economic diversification. We affirm that we will contribute to support the facilities and procedures that would promote investments between the two sides, and we cordially invite brothers in the Islamic Republic of Iran for investing in promising sectors in Musandam Governorate.

Mani bin Abdullah Al Shehhi, Musandam Branch Director for Al Rafd Fund, said: Participation of Al Rafd Fund at Musandam in the Omani Iranian exhibition is to introduce procedures of the Fund to Omani entrepreneurs and discuss funding opportunities possible for them if they wish to establish their own projects. Also the Fund seeks to find young people able to manage their institutions and also able to look for investors from other countries to expand these institutions.

Hamdan Al Ghafiri, sales and marketing manager for Al Mada Co. says: We thank Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and those who are in-charge of the exhibition for this opportunity given to us as Omanis producers to meet with producers and industries of Iran. It is an opportunity to discuss with them the possibility of finding agents and distributors for our products in Iran. Also this exhibition helps us to identify the Iranian products and the possibility of taking advantage of them.

Abdul Hamid Yusuf from Talal Qeshm, an Iranian company, says: We are pleased to participate in this Omani-Iranian exhibition. It is a strong evidence of the desire of the two parties for trade cooperation with each other. We participate here with the fish sector and the agricultural sector. We came also to learn about the opportunities available in the Sultanate in these sectors, and we are looking for partners to cooperate with them in the field of agricultural and fisheries investment, as everyone knows that the Qeshm Island is rich in such resources.

Farhat Hussain Abdullah of Hernj Golden Sweets Center, says: We are very much pleased to participate in this exhibition and our goal is to market the products of the center and build new relationships with the Omani side in order to discuss the possibility of joint investment between the two parties. Also we are looking for a commercial agent for us representing us in the Sultanate and working on distribution of the products to the Sultanate. Also we are looking for the possibility of exporting to other nearby countries, because the Sultanate is very close to us and this helps us to reduce shipping costs and other costs.
Workshop on TIR System

Under the patronage of His Excellency Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Salim al Futaisi, Minister of Transport and Communications, the Chamber hosted a workshop about TIR System -- Facilitating Trade and Transit, organized by the International Road Transport Union in collaboration with Oman Logistics Center.

TIR system, which is based on the TIR Agreement of the United Nations. It is the only universal transit system, a safe and a multimedia system that provides control at border crossing points, and ensures the security of the global supply chain, enabling to manage and avoid the risks.

The system currently links 69 countries around the world, and the number continues to grow, and its application allows to transfer goods from the country of origin to the final destination, being fully locked without the need for manual inspections of goods drastically, through the use of standard inspection means and the adoption of traffic customs documents known as «TIR Carnet». The International Road Transport Union (IRU), was established under the auspices of the United Nations in Geneva on 23 March 1948, and is considered as the organization to protect and care for the interests of the transportation industry in the world, to facilitate road transport on a global scale by issuing an international customs book to allow the passage of goods across the States under TIR Carnet which aims trust of customs administrations with all the intents by trucks.

The discussions in the workshop focused on the International TIR Convention and its features and benefits to facilitate international trade and the development and operation of transport and transit sector in the Sultanate. Facilitating trade is considered among the priorities of the development of the national economy and activating the trade exchange to create new job opportunities. The discussion also focused on their role in the development of land and intermodal transport sector and facilitating transit of goods, which is among the priorities of logistics vision of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

During the workshop, Dr. Salim bin Salim Al Junaibi, chairman of the transportation and logistics sector, at the Chamber, delivered his speech in which he said: The entrepreneurs who are making their way in the sector need some fundamentals to ensure their continuing success, which, if achieved, will create a base of entrepreneurs in the transport sector in various
Dr. Salem Al Junaibi:
TIR system will help improve the mechanism of application of duties and taxes more accurately. Transport as an integrated system can achieve well-being of citizens, support services and other economic sectors.

fields. We must also look to an important element, which is education, rehabilitation and training of professionals working in the transport sector services so as the sector can perform its work in accordance with the scientific and information systems that achieve success in its work and continuity in achieving profits.

He added: It also must be discussed that the obstacles to transit trade through trucks entering and leaving the Sultanate and its organization in order to be of benefits for its employees and investors, we should discuss the ways to facilitate trade and travel between the neighboring countries, and facilitate transport and trade operations through the building of commercial passages, as well as promoting transparency in the laws, regulations and procedures and relevant models to facilitate trade and transport.

TIR system: Expected Contribution
TIR system will contribute, if its application is approved in the Sultanate, in the growth of the national economy by reducing administrative and financial burdens associated with the traditional systems of Customs involving manual inspection, which requires extra time and effort without doubt. Also the application of this system will contribute directly to improve the mechanism of fees and taxes with more accuracy. On the other hand, it is expected that this system will contribute to simplify and facilitate the transport of goods transactions between the free zones in the Sultanate, which will serve the growth of the logistics sector in the Sultanate if properly applied.

Al Junaibi concluded his speech by saying: It is a pride for what we are witnessing in the development and achievement in the transport sector in the Sultanate in all the land, air and maritime fields. The Sultanate has road network connecting the south to its north on the one hand and linking with neighboring and surrounding countries on the other hand, in addition to what we are witnessing in air transport both at the level of airports or in strengthening the national carrier and opening the field to other airline services. If we talk on the sea ports sector, it is witnessing a shoulder to shoulder renaissance from the port of Raysut to Duqm to Muscat and then to Sohar. So transport sector has become an integrated system to fulfill the welfare of the citizens and support other economic sectors.
The goal of the Chamber’s branch at North Sharqiya Governorate in organizing an integrated economic meeting, which was attended by representatives of government institutions operating in the governorate is to develop the economy of the wilayats of North Sharqiya Governorate, and to seek development in order to achieve the objectives and interests of the private sector and promote the level of performance of its institutions.

Ali Bin Salem Al Hajri, OCCI Treasurer and Chairman of the Chamber’s North Sharqiya branch, stressed on the importance of strengthening cooperation and coordination between the public and private sector institutions. The business and investments are closely related to the extent of the strength of the relationship between the two parties, which are reflected on the growth and prosperity of the private sector activities.

Whenever the private sector enjoyed further supports from the competent authorities in the government sector, including the simplification of procedures, the elimination of bureaucracy, facilitating business, making it easy for whole investors, and working on compatibility between all parties involved in the business and supply of goods and services; the scope of work has widened, productivity has increased, utilization of private sector activities and its various fields has spread, and the business people have emerged in community achieving growth of their business, whether they are small, medium or large.

North Sharqiya Branch Demands One Stop Solution

The goal of the Chamber’s branch at North Sharqiya Governorate in organizing an integrated economic meeting, which was attended by representatives of government institutions operating in the governorate is to develop the economy of the wilayats of North Sharqiya Governorate, and to seek development in order to achieve the objectives and interests of the private sector and promote the level of performance of its institutions.

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The appropriateness of the business opportunities before giving permits
The meeting discussed on the most important developments in the labor market in the north-Sharqiya, and representatives of government institutions expressed their visions and suggestions about what and how to develop work in public and private institutions, whether they are in production or service fields, and how to overcome the economic challenges in the governorate, as well as about encouraging investment and development in all fields, and about drafting incentive plans and programs for business persons. Badr bin Ali Al Rashdi from Directorate General for Regional Municipalities and Water Resources at North Sharqiya governorate said during his intervention: Government and private parties have to come to common terms between them and to study the appropriateness of business opportunities in the proposed areas prior to issuing permits for the entrepreneurs to limit consequences that they may face later. He also explained during his talk that some entrepreneurs have no experience and perfect idea on business management in service institutions. Also he pointed that the Ministry has begun a short while ago the implementation of the electronic mail system for fast completion of transactions, and the simplification of procedures and access to handful threads making work easier within short time.

Agricultural and Livestock projects are noted for their fast growth
Engineer Saif bin Said Al Habsi, from the Directorate General for Agriculture and Livestock in North and South Sharqiya governorates, said: The Directorate supports the owners of agricultural holdings, livestock breeders and honey apiaries projects and it is sparing no effort to rehabilitate and get them into training programs in order to grow their business, which is a source of livelihood for them. They are, naturally, projects characterized by fast growth and capital that are not bad. The Directorate seeks to identify their needs and resolve impediments to the agricultural and livestock sectors and those who work there.

Electronic connectivity embodies the cooperation between the parties, but need to upgrade networks and modernization of some institutions for their services
Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Rasbi, Director of the Employment and Licensing at Directorate General of Manpower in North Sharqiya governorate said that the electronic link between government agencies reflects the ongoing cooperation between all agencies. It works on the exchange of data and the speed of completion of transactions and provides the accuracy of the data provided. But we need to upgrade networks and modernize some government institutions for their services in order to keep up with the electronic transformation plan in line with the national strategy. Also the Directorate General of manpower is facing some difficulties related to the culture of the employer especially regarding the number of foreign workers working in his establishment, his demand for more workers and the existence of some of the activities that require to meet certain conditions and commitment to labor laws and his implementation according to decisions and legislation.

Assigning more power to ‘Sanad’ offices
Jassim bin Salim Al Rashidi, designated for operations of ‘Rafd’ Fund in North Sharqiya Governorate said: The employer should be fully aware of the functions and operations of the Fund and the difference between the fund and the Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises, so that he can benefit the most possible from both sides. ‘Rafd’ Fund has carried out several seminars and participated in several introductory lectures on the most important services it provides and how to take advantage of them. Also we suggest that ‘Sanad’ offices have to be provided with wider powers and be entitled for issuing licenses so as to largely simplify the procedures and to benefit better.

Law of Competition and antitrust promotes investment and attracts consumers
Haitham bin Ibrahim Al Busaidi from the Public Authority for Consumer Protection praised the efforts of OCCI branch in North Sharqiya Governorate, and he said that the cooperation and coordination between the government and private institutions is an integrative process. Public Authority for Consumer Protection is seeking to strengthen the partnership with the private sector as it is a vital motive of the national economy. He pointed out in his speech to the law of Competition and antitrust, saying that it is to protect the markets and all
economic and trade activities and to monitor malpractices. In this aspect, we are doing qualitative awareness campaigns for the merchants and the consumers together and we are introducing the law to them. This will naturally promote investments, attract consumers and support the economic growth of the country.

The issuance of a unified guide and set up a one-stop station for government services

Engineer Hamoud bin Hamad Al Wahaibi, from the Directorate General of Housing in North Sharqiya, pointed out that there are several conditions for those who apply for land for tourist use or any commercial activity. There may be some hidden dilemma after giving the investor the land which he intended to set up the project. Sometimes he sells the plot or he establishes a project other than what he was permitted to, demanding, sometimes, more than one plot. He called for greater understanding and awareness in this aspect. Talal bin Khalfan al-Shuaibi, Director of Tourism in North Sharqiya Governorate, suggested providing public education on all subjects and the laws related to service organizations, through the issuance of a unified guide that explains entire subjects and distributing the same to local and foreign investors. This is in addition to the establishment of one-stop station by which the investor can implement all the new tasks of his business or extension of business that he established in the governorate. The idea of establishing local companies to serve in specific areas in the North Sharqiya Governorate is a good gesture and has rewarding investment returns.

Craft projects with economic benefits in the Governorate

On the other hand, Riya bint Rashid Al Amiriyya, divisional head for Administrative and Financial Affairs, the Public Authority for Craft Industries in North Sharqiya Governorate, said the craft projects have economic turnouts in the Governorate. The Authority is seeking to shed light on the training and rehabilitation programs aimed at promoting national crafts and its continuity and in forming a new generation of craftsmen characterized by the production ability. We always urge the integration of all the institutions to serve each other and create new mechanisms for marketing and promotion through collaboration with some government institutions such as the Ministry of Tourism, facilitating the availability of craft products in tourist estates, and introducing civilizational and cultural entity of Omani society to the tourist.

Salem Bin Jami Al Sunaidi, acting director of OCCI North Sharqiya Branch, expressed the Chamber’s willingness to embrace everything that would develop business in private institutions, specially, in small and medium ones, to seek to overcome the obstacles they face when they request for a service, and to be given priority in the support and assistance in all its forms. He stressed the importance of speeding up the process of electronic linking, which will provide solutions to many of the problems that currently limit the activities of the organizations.

The meeting concluded by agreeing to hold a workshop during which brainstorming sittings will be conducted jointly between government institutions; and effective solutions, programs and public policies capable to develop the governorate’s economy and to improve the performance of its institutions to high levels will be presented.
KAIZEN: A glorious Japanese method of administration

Many administrations in the world are trying to educate their managers and employees with the Japanese theory of Kaizen, which has been involved in our daily activity whether it is in the process of production or industry. Many Japanese and other companies and establishments are practicing and implementing it in routine activities of the business. This has been applied in various businesses while restoring Japan after Second World War. It has since spread throughout the world. Some Omani companies and establishments also apply this principle which became an effective factor in daily process of administration and productivity and in changing behavior of employees.

According to a lot of literatures, Kaizen is a way to achieve continuous improvement. It is a philosophy invented by Taiichi Ohno to lead industrial and financial institutions and it can be applied in all aspects of life, based on analysis and process. The word “Kai” means “change”, and the word “zen” means “for the better’. There is no doubt that a lot of people involved in industries are applying this technique.

The word «Kaizen» refers to activities that continuously improve all aspects of business, such as manufacturing and administrative management. At the same time it eliminates the waste of effort, energy and time, along with continuous improvement in the daily activity and brings changes together. This theory and philosophy has been today applied in many walks of life so as creativity and organization have become key parts of education in Japan, given that the goal of this is to improve individual’s spirit, worship, work, behavior, morals, mode of culture, and outlook on life, beside the way of dealing with others.

Today, the responsible leaders of industrial and economic companies and institutions are working to develop this philosophy to include various aspects of life, which helped it to spread in the world. The application of this theory results in clear impact on employment and production, as they focus on the most important strategical places, and it achieves immediate results. Beside it keeps the continuity of work in terms of plan (i.e. identifying the problem or the objective of change), do (to find a solution to the problem), check (to test the feasibility of the solution), and finally act (application of solution after studying its feasibility). As for achieving «Kaizen» someone has to follow some of the strategies of asking small questions to dispel fear and inspire creativity. Then he has to think on the small ideas to gain new habits and skills, followed by small acts that would guarantee success, as well as solve small problems among workers so that he need not go for solving greatest problems if he faced with a painful crisis. Then give small rewards for the person working towards the objective and others to achieve the best results. And finally realize the small moments that are critical and influential but ignored by others.

People in Japan, like other major countries, are interested in strategies aimed at continuous improvement in work and development in all aspects of the activity, either in engineering implementation, administration or education. All focus on change and elimination of waste, in resources, operations or the time in order to increase the positive outcome of the production in return of an incentive and reward, even a small amount of money, for workers for the improvement and development. This is what leads to a change in management as a result of granting small employee the power to change his field. By the application of «Kaizen,» the employees, especially at the lower levels, are heading towards creativity in their daily work. This creates competition in productivity, innovation and creativity in organizations and companies.
Seminar on Developing Legal Translation Offices

The Services Committee of OCCI recently organized a seminar on the development of legal translation offices, under the auspices of HE Saeed bin Saleh Al Kiyumi, chairman, during which he discussed the major challenges faced by the sector and finding practical and scientific solutions.

Regarding the seminar, Rashid bin Amer Maslahi, member of OCCI Board, and Chairman of Services Committee of Chamber says: This seminar is the first of legal translation sector, which was formed under the umbrella of the Services Committee of the Chamber for the conviction of the importance of this sector in the light of the comprehensive development witnessed by the Sultanate and development at the level of trade and economic activities. He stressed the importance of the seminar to highlight the reality of legal translation offices in the Sultanate especially the challenges they face and bring out the right solutions to all these challenges to revive and develop the translation sector.

Tough stations that require hard work
Mohammed bin Abdul Karim Al Hooti, Chairman of translation sector in Services committee, said: This seminar is an initiative of the legal translation sector at the Chamber. We seek to highlight the challenges faced by the translation offices and find practical and scientific solutions that contribute to the development of translators and translation agencies. He added that OCCI, the official sponsor of the private sector in the country, believes that the legal translation offices are run purely by national competencies and can be a quality addition in the development sector in general and in the economic sector, in particular, if found serious solutions to the challenges faced by the translation sector and obstacles to its development.

He pointed out that translation is a discipline and art in itself since early times. No one can just simply involve in it only by his knowledge of languages. Translation is a discipline taught in universities and educational institutions for its importance, until the student reaches to the level of translator. He will be passing through tough situations that require him to hard work, vigilance and perseverance for many years. The study of translation is not less than the other specializations and is one of the difficult disciplines. So it cannot be possible to equalize a graduate in translation and specialist in translation with anyone who knows another language.

Regulation of Legal Translation
Royal Decree (18/2003) was issued to regulate legal translation as this profession has importance of the proper transfer of language contents in a document from one language to another, and because of the need for all segments of society and all sectors of government agencies, courts, companies, banks, the lawyer offices, accountants and individuals in various legal fields and business, medical, technical and literary works to be translated. Omani legislator has been keen to endorse conditions that must be fulfilled by those who practice this profession as stated in Article 10 of the law. Also the legislator is keen to assign the penalties for violation of the law which is stated in Article (15) thereof. He explained that some institutions in the public and private sector seek the help of translators, without regard to being a qualified legal translator, and in some cases during the court...
Al Maslahi: The Seminar is the first activity of the sector for legal translation, which was formed under the umbrella of the Services Sector Committee in OCCI.

Al Hooti: The legal translation offices are run purely by national competencies and are considered a qualitative addition to the development of the economy.

hearings, any lawyer or anyone present there is doing the translation in court if the translator is not available there in the sitting. Also in the notary offices and police stations to write the first investigation reports and the signing of the partnership agreements for investors and other institutions, they accept translation of any office or any person without verifying their qualifications and legality. This is what led to the existence of this huge number of translation errors in the official correspondence, and in commercial signboards and traffic guides in the roads, not to mention the translations in the shops for the items and varieties of products and the details of invoices and in other places, due to the inability of the translator to reach to the accurate and correct meaning.

Transforming existing translation offices that comply with the conditions as legal translation offices

He pointed that the seminar aimed to present many of the obstacles of translation and its challenges and how to address them, and how to develop the current translation offices to be converted into legal translation offices that meet the conditions, and the abolition of offices non-compliant to the conditions, as well as review of the regulation of legal translator Act and the possibility of exceptions in some cases as necessary, study of bodies that document legal translation work, and how to employ translators to do a review of the translation before documentation, and method of cooperation and coordination with universities and colleges to improve and develop the level of teaching of translation. Also the seminar aimed to discuss the method of coordination and cooperation with public and private sector to assign translation service projects of various kinds and areas (translation of articles, instant translation, translation of films and providing translation devices) to the legal translation offices, the possibility of holding regular seminars and training courses for translators, and the establishment of workshops to open new legal translation offices to meet market demands.

Recommendations

The seminar came up with several recommendations including addressing the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, to urge them to implement what are stipulated in the Royal Decree No. 18/2003 for regularizing legal translations in the Sultanate in light of the translation offices, which offer translation services, and is not registered as offices of legal translation for the activity of translation, and to give deadline for the illegal offices of translation, that does not exceed six months, to correct their positions and to comply with the requirements of legal translation offices and the requirement of full-time dedication.

Also the seminar recommended to address the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources, Muscat Municipality and Dhofar Municipality not to adopt commercial signboards without certification by legal translation offices, because there are some errors in commercial signboards, which are not good for the reputation of our country, also to address on the addition of activity of legal translation within the activities listed with them, and to address the Secretariat General of the Council of Administration of Justice and the courts with respect to cooperation with all legal translation offices in the event of demand for instant translators for all languages and to seek help of efficient people.

It is also recommended the cooperation with OCCI to conduct a delegation of legal translation sector to institutions outside the Sultanate specialized in translation work to take advantage of the countries, in the development of the field of translation, provided that the Chamber bears 50% of the expenses, and the formation of a team of translators and academicians to visit the Ministry of Higher Education to understand teaching system of translation and cooperation with educational institutions in order to develop the teaching of translation in colleges and universities.

The Seminar also recommended the importance of the establishment of workshops and training sessions in the governorates of the Sultanate, in the field of translation to develop translators for all types of translation work in order to increase the number of efficient legal translation offices.
Offering summer breeze in the Chedi Muscat Resort

With the stifling summer months fast approaching, The Chedi Muscat welcomes back its Summer Breeze offer, giving GCC residents the perfect excuse to escape the desert heat and relax in Zen-like surroundings. Available from 15 April to 30 September, the offer allows guests to wile away the sizzling days in the swimming pools and stunning grounds of the idyllic hotel.

With rates from RO 99 per room per night, guests can choose from 158 beautifully-appointed rooms and suites, all set in manicured gardens, scattered with serene ponds and swaying palms. Furthermore, those spending two nights or more receive one complimentary night including three-course dinner for two at the award-winning restaurant, where they can dine on an array of exquisite international cuisine.

Guests can spend the days cooling down at one of the hotel’s three temperature-controlled swimming pools, including the breathtaking 103-metre Long Pool, the region’s longest and the beachside Chedi Pool, both of which feature plush-shaded daybeds. Throughout the day, they can rehydrate on fresh juices brought to their tableside or head to The Chedi Pool Cabana for light bites from the Mediterranean-inspired menu, taking advantage of the 20 per cent discount on food and beverages. For guests with children, The Serai Pool has ample awnings to provide welcome shade in and around the water.
A country renowned for being the world’s largest manufacturer of vehicles, China, is also home to Great Wall Motors Company Limited, a leader in the sector for building tough, reliable and value for money vehicles. Recognized as China’s largest Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) producer as of 2010, their range of exclusive Haval SUVs made a remarkable entry in the Oman market with the official launch of the brand on Wednesday, March 2, 2016 under the proud dealership of Rumaila Motors, part of Zubair Group.

As the sole dealers of Great Wall, China’s leading private carmaker, Rumaila Motors aims to replicate in Oman, the remarkable success enjoyed by this brand in key international markets. Capitalizing on Great Wall’s acclaimed durability, powerhouse capability and good looks, Rumaila Motors couples it with their excellent sales and service component to introduce to the industry a new trend-setter in the SUV market. With outlets in the capital city of Muscat and six other regional towns, Rumaila Motors has already established its extensive network of quality, high-end showrooms manned with professional and well-trained staff to provide the necessary assistance to customers.

Since the launch of its first SUV in China in 2002, Haval has progressed in leaps and bounds, establishing itself as the premier SUV manufacturer in the world’s biggest automobile market. Recognized as the top-selling SUV brand in China for 13 consecutive years, Haval was honored with innumerable awards like the ‘Integrated Innovation Award’ at the ‘Ceremony for Achieverments in Independent Innovation of Chinese Vehicles over the Five Decades’. Haval also earned the valuable certification of being China’s first EU-certified independent SUV. Various Haval models like the Haval H6 won other titles like the ‘CCTV Independent SUV of 2011’ and consecutively in 2012 was also crowned as the ‘CCTV SUV of 2012’. Earlier in 2015, Haval H9 was also honored as the ‘Best SUV in 2015’. With various accolades to its name, Haval is committed to becoming the world’s leading specialist in the SUV category. When other manufacturers are spreading their talents across a wide range of vehicles and platforms, Haval is focusing their research and development to specialize in the fastest growing automotive sector in the world – the SUV sector.

Till date, the market volume of Haval SUV has been more than 2 million units. HAVAL has invested heavily in a brand new, state-of-the-art technical centre in Baoding and new manufacturing plants at Tianjin and Xushui. Combined, the new plants are capable of producing 1.8 million SUVs each year. Putting their global strategies in position Haval caters to various overseas markets including Russia, Australia, North America and the Middle East.

Offering an SUV for the varying needs of their wide customer-base, Haval models have an assortment of large, medium and small SUVs. Their extensive line-up includes SUVs for the city as well as the off-road, amongst different other types of SUVs.
Having established a firm foothold in the Sultanate for more than a decade, Lulu Group has opened another store in the coastal town of Suwaiq today. The 122nd outlet of the group and the 16th one in Oman was inaugurated by H.E. Shaikh Muhna Bin Saif Bin Salim Al Lamki, Governor of North Al Batinah. The opening of the newest outlet will see the group, which is on a vast expansion mode, anchor itself firmly to the modern, customer-centric retail landscape of the Sultanate.

Built over an area of 100,000 sq feet., the new outlet is designed with customer convenience and product variety in mind. The outlet has ample parking space, wide aisles for easy shopping a range of world-class products and brands at the fairest price which will be the major attraction of the new outlet. It will have separate sections for fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and poultry, fish, dairy products, ready-to-eat products and a state-of-the-art live bakery and hot foods kitchen. In addition to this, the outlet will feature high-fashion garments, electronics, IT products and home appliances, stationery etc. A group of well-trained staff and dedicated customer services will ensure customers a comfortable and wholesome shopping experience.

Commenting on the new outlet, Ananth A.V, Regional Director, Lulu Oman said. “We see the retail sector going through a period of change. Innovation and quality will be the game changers as the demands of customers continue to increase. To succeed in this environment, Lulu has made a concerted attempt to respond quickly and implement innovations based on strategy, capabilities, and initiatives, guided by research. Our emphasis on improving levels of convenience and services and our efforts to operate in an environmentally friendly manner have enabled us to gain a competitive edge in Oman’s retail sector. This new project is part of our commitment to make our significant presence felt among residents even in the remotest part of the country” he added.

The Operations Leaders and Quality Assurance Teams at Pizza Hut Oman recently concluded the International Food Safety Online Training and Examination; a course offered by YUM International. Pizza Hut is a subsidiary of YUM brands, thus undergoing periodic trainings, assessments and accreditations, following the brand’s corporate philosophy to maintain executional excellence across varied functions.

Restaurant managers at Pizza Hut Oman undertook the YUM Servsafe International Food Safety certification which comprised of three levels and nine hours of intensive training on matters related to food safety supervision. Yogesh Shah, General Manager, Khimji Restaurant Division stated, “At Pizza Hut, we take the title of being ‘Oman’s favourite pizza place’ seriously, hence we leave no stone unturned to ascertain the delivery of a memorable dining experience to our customers. It is our responsibility to manage the front-of-the-house as well as the back-of-the-house operations and this certification is a continued effort towards maintaining a sharp focus on executional excellence across all our functions.”

The course aims at updating the knowledge of the restaurant managers and key operations personnel by testing their current approach and familiarising them with new-age food safety regulations and methodologies. Commenting on the certification, Vivek Pande, CEO, Khimji Ramdas Lifestyle Group, stated, “We follow rigorous Food Safety Systems and Standards as our business demands that we are constantly aware of and respond to potential health and safety issues related to the food we serve. We are delighted to inform our valued customers that our restaurant managers have passed the online course with flying colours and have renewed their know-how, skill and abilities; promising a safe gastronomical experience with Pizza Hut.”